

THE GREAT WET WAY



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THE GREAT WET WAY



"The happy traveller bursts into tears"

The Great Wet Way

By

Alan Dale *psend.*
Cohen, alfred j.



Illustrated by
H. B. Martin

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To My Daughter

DAISY

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‘APOLOGETICALLY

Once upon a time, many, many years ago, the man who “went to Europe” was looked upon as somewhat remarkable, and even heroic. Shoals of newspaper reporters met the incoming steamers, and eagerly interviewed the intrepid travellers, asking them all sorts of leading questions, and chronicling the answers with avid accuracy.

Tempora mutantur. To-day, everybody goes to Europe. The steamers are crowded, as for a picnic. The townships and the villages of the far west supply a goodly percentage of the passengers. It is neither remarkable nor heroic to go to Europe to-day. In fact, it is rather provincial. Exclusive people even hesitate before admitting that they are going abroad. They select a time that is unpopular with the mass of tourists, and satisfy their consciences in that way. Newspaper reporters no longer flock to meet the incoming steamers. It would keep them too busy. Moreover, the views of Tom, Dick, and Harry are not startling.

The trip to Europe, however, with its characteristics of to-day, is vastly amusing to those blessed or cursed with a sense of humour. The close association, the enforced intimacy with what the English call

Apologetically

"trippers" and what we call "tourists," must be strenuously interesting to those who enjoy the study of human nature.

This book is not serious. It is the result of some fifty trips across the Atlantic, on all kinds of steamers, and with all sorts of people. I have tried to discuss every conceivable phase of life on the big liner, which some travellers consider a lost week, and which I regard as a seven days' joy; in fact, a picnic. My object has been simply to amuse those who have crossed, those who will cross, and the friends of those who have crossed and who will cross. This is a "tall order," don't you think? This is an appeal to a tremendous public. It is, in fact, an overwhelming appeal. Nor must I forget the members of the various steamship companies.

If their sense of humour responds, then indeed shall I consider myself amply repaid.

ALAN DALE.

NEW YORK, 1909.

I

THE QUEER THINGS WE SEE



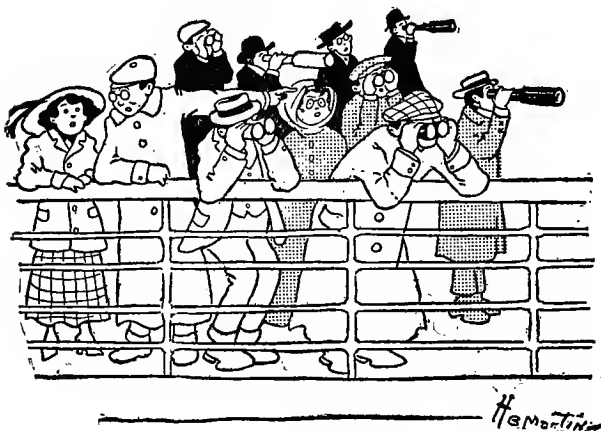
H!" you sigh, in exquisite relief, as the steamer slowly sails from port, and you see the last of everything and everybody, "now for a week of delightfully recuperative rest, with nothing to worry you, nobody to interfere with you, and—best of all—nothing to do. Now

for that enviable period of inertia—a delicious dream of *dolce far niente*."

You firmly believe that you are going to "*dolce-far-nient*," but you never do. Not a bit of it. Accompanying you are fully as many people as in your most crowded moments you ever meet on land. And these people are absolutely bent on finding something—generally anything—to do, and routing you from your pleasurable sloth to help them do it. Many a time have I sworn, as I tucked my steamer-rug cosily

around my feet, adjusted my chair at a comfortable angle, and armed myself with a coveted book, that no power on sea, other than a fire or a shipwreck, should dislodge me. Yet I have never succeeded in discomfiting the fiends whose business it is to provide me, willy-nilly, with something to do.

I have settled myself in a particularly entrancing



lethargy, and am determined to "do myself good" at all costs, when the usual thing happens. An excited passenger rushes up to me, stands in front of me, and begins: "Come to the other side of the ship. Quick. For goodness sake, don't miss it. Everybody's there, and you'll be sorry if you don't come. Put that silly old book away, and come on."

I sigh resignedly, unpick my steamer-rug from my

resistless limbs, drop my book, and accept the vivid hand that the excited passenger offers. He helps me up, and drags me with him to the other side of the ship, where the wind is blowing a gale, and it is hateful. All the passengers are there, in agitated groups. Emotion is in the air, wind-tossed. There seems to be a great deal doing. Men and women are talking in all kinds of voice; they are armed with opera-glasses, field-glasses, and telescopes. It is a busy moment.

"Look!" cries my chaperon. "Look. See where I'm pointing? Follow my finger. There. You've got it. You must see it."

But I don't. I see nothing. There is plenty of water, and there is plenty of sky, but not more than usual of either. There are also many clouds. I see all that, and nothing more, and I say so.

"Nonsense!" he exclaims testily. "Here, take my glasses, and look straight ahead of you—as straight as you can. *Now* do you see?"

Now I see. I see a black speck on the horizon. I hate black specks. A year ago I saw so many of them that I went to a doctor, and he told me that it was indigestion. I had to take pepsin after meals for three months. And now this idiot appears to be intensely rejoiced because he has forced me to perceive an inoffensive black speck on the horizon.

"It is a boat!" he cries joyously. "There is no doubt about it at all. If you look carefully—take

your time, old chap—you'll see the smoke. Yes, it's a boat—a boat—a boat!"

This passenger is a perfectly sane, level-headed business man. He is going to Constantinople to sell sausage cases—surely a pleasing and romantic mission. Yet he is all worked up, because he thinks he sees a boat on the horizon. I am amazed. If he could see a Brooklyn trolley-car, a Strand omnibus, or a touring automobile, I should be able to understand his excitement. But a boat! One expects to see boats, for ours is not the only vessel on the Atlantic Ocean. There are scores of others. I look at him, and marvel at his agitation. Everybody else is equally agitated. One would think that a boat was the most extraordinary and dramatic thing that had ever happened. On land, in a subway train, nobody betrays any very intense emotion when another train passes. One would be more surprised to see a flock of sheep or a herd of cows.

"I asked the Captain about it," he goes on, and I do not doubt him. The poor Captain is there to be asked asinine questions all day long. "The Captain says it's a tramp. Only a tramp. It is probably going to Nova Scotia. The Captain couldn't say for certain, but later on he will be quite sure. Thanks, I'll take my glasses. I don't want to miss anything."

Do not imagine that you will ever be allowed to miss any passing boats. If there are any going, you

will be forced to watch them until they fade from sight. A hundred passengers will dog your footsteps, and worry you, until, in sheer desperation, you resign yourself to the inevitable.

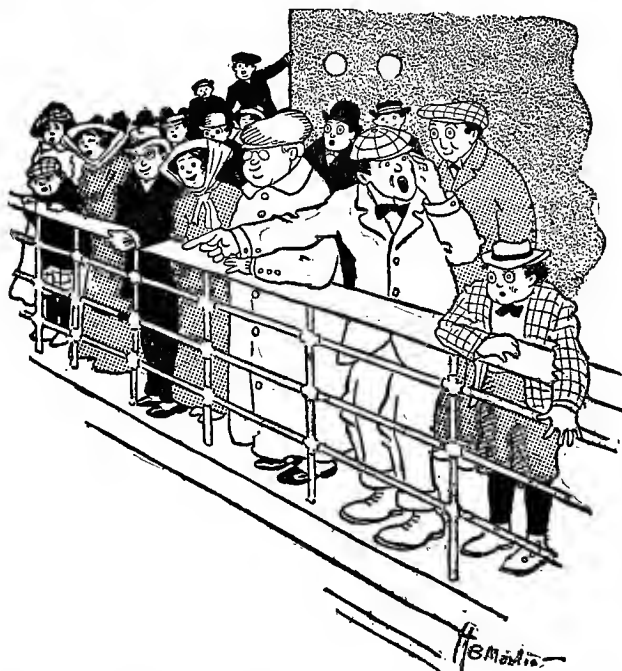
The sight of one poor little tramp in mid-ocean is, however, as nothing compared with another attraction which plunges the passengers into a seething vortex of fervour. It never fails. It is persistent, and it is reliable. I was napping in my state-room when this event occurred last year. A loud knock at my door awakened me, and in came my room-mate all wrought up. He was beside himself, and I wished that he had stayed there, instead of putting himself beside me.

"I knew you would be furious if you missed it," he said palpitatingly, "you've just time to get up on deck. I can't wait. Come on."

Off he rushed. Although I had "presentiments," I felt that I was compelled to follow him. That is the trouble. One is afraid not to investigate the ship's little excitements. They *might* be big ones, though they never are. On deck, I found a chaotic assemblage of passengers, jostling each other for places at the ship's side. Boys had clambered into



the lifeboats, stout matrons stood on steamer chairs, Wall Street magnates elbowed themselves to the rail. Even the clergy had lost their serenity and poise. A



Roman Catholic priest leaned so far over the rail that he appeared to be contemplating suicide.

"See them!" cried the priest. "Are they not cunning? It's a shoal of porpoises, sure enough. Look at them, leaping through the water."

I am willing to swear that they were the very same porpoises that I had seen thirty times before. In

fact, I recognised one very fat porpoise by the twinkle in his eye. All that these porpoises do, for a living, is to describe semicircles in the water. They do this most energetically for five minutes, and seem to enjoy it. Then they get sick of it, and cease to follow us. I know so completely what transatlantic passengers think of porpoises, that I always wonder what the porpoises think of transatlantic passengers. I can imagine that fat porpoise with the twinkling eye saying to his mate: "There they are again—those floating hayseeds. Look at them—one more foolish than the other. Let's give them the shake. Come on, mommer, into the quiet and unspoiled sea." The porpoises make the hit of their gay young fishy lives as they do their little turn. It is a free show. It is the only free thing on the ship. No steamship company has yet decided to charge for the porpoise view. This will undoubtedly come later. I shall not subscribe. I shall buy a ticket *without* porpoises. These fish never do anything new. They are utterly lacking in originality.

But the passengers were all agog. They were making notes in their diaries. (There are hundreds of miserable wretches on shore to whom those diaries will be read.) I watched the diary fiends. One wrote: "Aug. 16. Seen a shoal of porpoises." Another jotted down more elegantly: "Aug. 16. Porpoises observed in latitude —, longitude —." A third, of a more literary persuasion, began: "We

were all resting comfortably after lunch, when what should we see but some jolly, lovely little fish that are known as ——."

He looked up at me, and asked ingenuously: "What is the plural of 'porpoise'?"

I told him that I had every reason to believe that the plural was quite the same this year as last—simply "porpoises."

"Thank you so much," he said, quite unabashed. "I thought it was 'porpi.' Porpus—porpi. Very foolish of me."

To which I replied "Not at all" or "Don't mention it" or "It's a pleasure"—or some feeble phrase of that ilk. The porpoises seemed to exert a benign influence on the ship. People who had never spoken to each other before, broke the ice, and grew chatty. Several haughty folks came down from their perches, and talked quite genially, and un-uppishly. In fact, we were as one big family—not that big families are especially amiable, for they usually are not. We were as one big family that had just "made up" after a period of the protracted bicker that is so popular with big families when they are respectable and disagreeable.

' On land, you would refuse to cross the street to look at a shoal of porpoises if they were offered you on the other side. At sea, you are supposed to be hopelessly addicted to the very things that you despise when you are not there. I have met these por-

poise fiends, rushing in contemptuous haste through the magnificent aquarium at Naples, because Naples is not in mid-ocean, and its wonders are discounted when they can be gazed at comfortably. I have encountered porpoise enthusiasts who live in New York, but have never visited Manhattan's aquarium. It is just a sort of sea-mania. There are many sea manias. The salt water seems to bring them out, and I daresay that they are better out than in. They are nearly all extraordinary, and peculiar to the transatlantic crossing. They flourish luxuriantly during the trip, and are as dead as a doornail, hopelessly past resuscitation, as soon as land is reached. Then they are quickly forgotten. People hate to have the queer things they do at sea thrown in their face when they are planted on prosaic dry land. The logic of their nature quietly re-asserts itself. It has been but temporarily displaced.

There is one particular steamship occupation for which it is quite impossible to furnish an adequate explanation. I refer to the rabid and energetic collection of autographs—autographs of nobodies—that we all feel impelled to make. I always find myself running after Mr. Jones of Kalamazoo, or Mr.



Smith of Prairie du Chien, Wis., and simply begging him for his autograph. I eagerly hand him my passenger list, or an autograph book for him to sign. Now I have never heard before of either Mr. Jones, or Mr. Smith, and sincerely hope never to hear of him again. Yet I pester such people for their autographs, and am not happy until I get them. I don't know why. It is a sea mania.

You find yourself cornering dreadful people, and absolutely holding them up for their autographs, which you will immediately throw away as soon as you land. It is a most remarkable thing. You are perfectly serious about it; you make the demand diffidently; you stand there obsequiously while the autograph is written, and you walk away with it triumphantly with a sort of "I-have-eaten-the-canary" expression on your face.

These people are perfect strangers to you. You have never spoken to them before in your life. If you met them subsequently in the street, you would probably fail to recognise them. But you *must* have their autographs. There is a *something*, and I have no idea what it is, that prompts you to collect worthless autographs. I am an anti-autograph fiend on dry land, and have no use for the finest specimen going, unless it be appended to a fat and happy cheque. I do not consider an autograph characteristic of the man who writes it. It is usually a splurge in a handwriting that he uses for no other purpose. It tells

you nothing. If I admire an author, or a playwright, I should greatly cherish a page of his manuscript, which would be assuredly characteristic. I do not care a hang for his autograph or for a cart-load of any autographs.

Yet on the ship, I am hustling around, beseeching people to sign my *menu*, and doing it as though my very life depended on the success of the quest. I am most generous with my own autograph, and hand it out right and left. Anybody can have it. There are boys and girls on board who are hopeless victims of this curious mania. There are old women who are badly bitten. Some of them make you write your name in pencil on afternoon-tea cloths, or doilies, and then work in silk over your signature. Beautiful thought!

A busy young girl on a recent return trip wore a hat all covered with the autographs of passengers with whom she had sailed from New York. It was a Panama hat, and as she walked round and round the deck, you could read such names as: "Moe Levy," "Archibald Einstein," "Percy Pruneface," "Fay Dinkelspiel" and "Katusha Isaacs." She



never wore any other hat. She was awfully proud of it. When you saw the hat in the distance, the blur of signatures on the straw ground looked quite disreputable. The hat had the appearance of being battered and dirty. As it grew nearer you read gradually: "Moe Levy," "Archibald Einstein," etc., and the signatures got on your nerves. I often found myself wondering what Moe Levy, Archibald Einstein, Percy Pruneface, and the others were doing at that particular moment and where they were! There was even a kind of maudlin pathos about these reflections—the sort of pathos that is usually the result of persistent libation. Now, I ask you if that girl, who seemed to be a sensible, practical young person, would dare to walk down Broadway or



Fifth Avenue wearing that hideous autograph hat, which was as unbecoming as it was abnormal? She would probably be followed by a howling and derisive mob of chaotic small boys. Yet on board ship she was unmolested. After the first few days nobody noticed the autograph hat. It had stamped its eccentricity on the ship.

People write their names in Tennyson or Longfellow "birthday books" by the side of some lovely poetic quotation. For instance in a space allotted to May 25, you read:

With promise of a morn as fair
And all the train of bounteous hours
Conduct by paths of glowing powers
The reverence and the silver hair.

This delightful verse graces the birthday of "Sylvia Potzenheimer" or "Marian Schlachski," and "gems" from many Tennyson and Longfellow poems are made to fit the birthdays of equally delightful people. It is very pleasing, and the books fill up quickly. Object: unknown. Birthday presents seem to have gone out of fashion. I fancy I must have written my name in at least a hundred birthday books. Nobody has ever sent me a birthday present. I live in hopes that some day my lavishly scattered autographs may bear fruit. Up to the present, they have been hopelessly sterile. Perhaps they have been thrown into the waste-paper basket.

The collection of autographs on board ship is just "something to do"—something very silly, I think, but I can't help doing it. I shall do it again next year. I know I shall, though at this precise moment I realise the bewildering imbecility of the proceeding. Sometimes the request for your autograph is rather

flattering—on land. At sea, never. At sea, you know that people do not really want your signature; they have merely “got to have it,” for reasons that, as I said before, are perfectly inexplicable.



People cannot get out of the habit of “doing things.” They have been doing things all winter; they have promised themselves a complete rest on board ship, and lo! they cannot rest. They are im-

pelled to eternal movement, like the Wandering Jew. Rather than do nothing gracefully, they do everything ungracefully. They stand on deck, in the broiling sun, and play shuffleboard, a most stupefying proceeding, to my mind. They call it a pastime, and not a proceeding. You see them playing by the hour, pushing what looks like a dog-biscuit into a numbered, chalk-marked square, with an instrument that resembles a rake. They are quite excited about it, and even wax indignant when you happen to walk over the chalk-marks and interfere with their game.

They do not play for stakes, but for pure honour and glory, which are always delectable, if not nourishing. Some miserable sailor chalks up the deck for them—generally about the third day out—and they are busy at this “pastime” until they land. On shore, they would probably regard it as a lunatic sport. At sea, it is invested with the charm of complete recreation. It “kills time.” Everybody wants to “kill time.” To me it seems a great pity, for goodness knows, it will die a natural death. Time-killers are murderers, though they never realise that fact. Many people on board ship will tell you that they are suffering from nervous breakdown or some other neurasthenic contortion, but there they are, using all their nervous force to invent some particularly inane method of “killing time” easily.

Repose is a quality that is unknown on the ocean-liner, unless it be a very rough passage, and every-

body is sea-sick. It is a cruel thing to say, and I rather hate myself for saying it, but sea-sickness does keep people awfully good, and it gives you a chance to read a bit, and "loaf" a bit, and indulge in the supreme and unsurpassed luxury of quiet—unless you, too, be laid low! But sea-sickness does not last long. Its victims recover rapidly, and are all the livelier for their little bout. They make up for lost time.

On one trip about twenty boys and girls, whose ages varied from eighteen to twenty-five, had all been prostrated by sea-sickness. They were soon better—they were soon awe-inspiringly well. Their health



was astoundingly improved, and they became the "life" of the ship. At night, they sat in their steamer-chairs on deck, and sang steadily from eight o'clock till midnight. They sang through all the musical comedies, operettas, burlesques, extravaganzas, and rag-time excrescences of the New York season. There was scarcely a known coon-ditty that they did not sing in "glee" form. They sang college songs and national airs, and Sousa marches, and even two-steps. The supply never gave out. They warbled horrors from the music-halls. They gave

us the classic numbers of Vesta Victoria, Alice Lloyd, Vesta Tilley, Harry Lauder, and all the rest of the "vaudeville" nightingales of both sexes.

These they sang every night, without respite. They never seemed to speak to each other—only to sing. Impossible to escape this chorus, except perchance in the hold of the ship, among the trunks. All the non-singing passengers objected, but nobody dared to say so. These young persons were amusing themselves innocently, and though cynics may aver that innocence *can* be obnoxious, they may not say so.

Music certainly hath charms. It must have. But exactly why twenty nice young men and women should shout coon-songs at each other, instead of revelling in affable discussion, is something of a sea-mystery. On land, they would have exchanged confidences, have indulged in perfectly pardonable gossip, have addicted themselves to the pleasing pursuit of rubber-necking. At sea, they sang. They lifted up their voices in "Afraid to go Home in the Dark," "Stop Your Tickling, Jock," "Waiting at the Church," and "I Don't Like Your Family." Merry, effervescent, rollicking young folks! Perhaps they were anxious to drown the swish of the Atlantic in the billows produced by their own vocal chords. If so, they succeeded.

Steamship companies realise the inability of passengers to take the sea-cure, and enjoy mental and physical relaxation. There is the "shopping wo-

man " on board ship, who is very indignant at being idle for seven days. She may not want to buy anything—she rarely does—but she wants to "shop."

"I simply cannot wait until I get to Sixth Avenue and Twenty-third Street," said one of her to me last year. "I call the transatlantic trip brutal and deadening. I'd like to be shot across the ocean in a pneumatic tube. I need the dry-goods stores. I could just live in them, and it is in New York that they flourish in all their perfection."

This artistic feminine soul was rejoiced at the discovery that the ship's barber had things to sell. She spent most of her mornings with the barber, looking at his wares. It was on one of the Holland-America Line's boats. He had for sale little wooden shoes, Dutch tiles, hat-pins, combs, flags, pocket-books, souvenirs of Holland, and a large variety of similar delights. She was happy when she discovered this, and announced quite emphatically that she was enjoying her trip at last. Just before landing, she grew reckless, and showed us a Dutch tile that she had purchased, after anxious deliberation, for forty-five cents. She was informed by some presumably jealous sister-passenger, that she had been "done" and that those particular tiles were to be seen, in lavish display, at the "five and ten cent" stores in New York.

Books, flowers, and candies, which are for sale on many liners, do not interest the "shopping woman." She likes something more useful. She clamours for ribbons and laces and gew-gaws. A big dry-goods



"You find a dozen people standing behind you"

store with a ranch on board ship would be enormously patronised. Possibly this attraction will be offered in the not very distant future, and it will be interesting to watch "sea-shoppers," and note their peculiarities. For, as every taste on board ship differs from that observed on land, the sea-shopper will be a curiosity.

The only thing on board ship that differs in no essential from the similar pursuit on land, is the game of cards in the smoke-room. The sea-change is not apparent at bridge, for instance. People are just as ratty and as disagreeable on the ocean as on land. I find that my partners at bridge, in mid-Atlantic, are just as ready to call me to task and book me as a fool as they are at home. They do not regard my bad play with any particular sea-favour. In fact, they are just as alive to my shortcomings as a bridge-player. As they have been perfect strangers to me before the game, I am always in hopes that they will be amiable and long-suffering, as they *never* are on land. But they *never* are on sea.

The smoke-room on the liner is filled with people anxious to forget the ocean, and be as much on land as they can. Those who don't play cards watch those who do. In a bridge game, you find a dozen people standing behind you, and watching your play—which is enough to rattle the strongest-minded. You feel that you are bound to play according to the ideas of the twelve good men and true at your back. On land, you would request them to run away and play, and leave you to your miserable fate. At sea, you are

at their mercy—which is the same as being “at sea” in another sense. I grow hopelessly muddled, do the most idiotic things, and am regarded with awe, mingled with contempt.

At sea, the same inexplicable sentiment that tempts me to collect autographs induces me to play bridge—which I can’t play. It is amazing. I find myself running around, trying to unearth three people upon whom to saddle myself. Often, I am regarded as a “card-sharp”—I feel sure of that. My strange frenzy for bridge stamps me as a gambler, and people look askance at me. They fear me—until they have played with me, when they despise me. I have the face of a card sharp. I know it, and the idea is oppressive and haunting. I *am* innocent and ingenuous, confiding, foolish, and frivolous, but I do not look it. I try to put on a transparent and boyish expression, as I endeavour to capture my three victims, and perhaps the keen desire I feel to be looked upon as harmless militates against me.

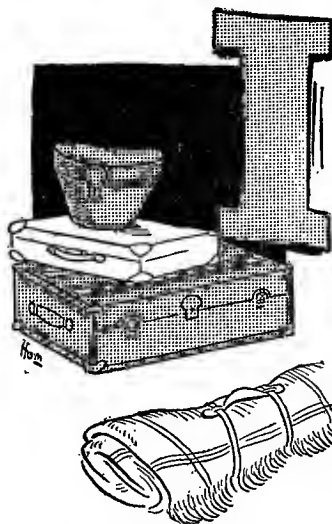
The twelve people who stand behind me, watching my game, are very suspicious at first. They are anxious to protect my three victims, if necessary. This never lasts long. At the end of the first rubber, I have invariably shown my quality—the quality of a card-idiot. This is, perhaps, the most remarkable of all the sea-manias, for knowing my utter inferiority as a bridge-player, I am nevertheless impelled, by irresistible impulse, to play in the smoke-room, and give myself away to a batch of callous strangers. On

one occasion I played with three Texans, all bridge experts! I played with the courage born of ignorance, but only one game. They never spoke to me again. They probably thought that I had escaped from some lunatic asylum. And I had hunted them up, and begged them to play! After each game I am filled with remorse, self-contempt, bitter humiliation, and I try to swear off. It is impossible. It is a sea-obsession, and I am in its clutches.

The queer things we see, and the queer things we do on board ship, are, as a matter of fact, unique. You go on board sane, logical, level-headed and serious; you become comparatively insane, unlevel-headed, and trivial. You lose your balance, and why you lose it, is something that I have never yet been able to explain. You never change your identity when you stay at a big hotel on land. But just because that big hotel floats, and rests on the salty depths of the Atlantic, you are temporarily somebody else. You realise the significance of the dual personality, and you bow to what seems to be an inexorable law. When I find myself opera-glassing the passing ship, raving over a shoat of porpoises, in fevered quest of passengers' autographs, and playing bridge in the smoke-room, I am convinced that I have left my other self on shore. I am somebody else whom I scarcely recognise, and certainly do not admire. My real self would cut my ship self dead on Fifth Avenue or Broadway!

II

THE ROOM-MATE



IF you possess a gentle, confiding, optimistic nature, and are not too hampered by the malevolent whisperings of a sense of humour, you will not be affrighted by the sudden appearance on your horizon of the room-mate. I do not say that you can ever learn to love the room-mate, but with certain mental attributes you can brush him aside as you would the playful and persistent mosquito.

Of the room-mate I can speak from my soul! I know him in all his varieties. I can prate of him when he is unique, and comparatively amenable to reason; when he is double, and less amenable to reason, and—the admission is horrible—when he is triple. Let me make myself clearly understood. I have lived the subtle and intimate life of the ocean-steamer stateroom, with one mate, with two mates, and with three mates! I have invariably arrived

safely at my destination. Permit me to dwell upon that fact, for, with three room-mates I did not seem to mind much whether I landed or not. Nothing mattered particularly. A shipwreck on a desert island (though desert islands are disgustingly rare nowadays) would not have been detestable. On a desert island, at least, I could have crawled away to some secluded nook, and have shaken my three room-mates.

Oddly enough, you do not select your own room-mate. The steamship company, in affectionate regard, does that for you. The steamship company never positively insists upon giving you a room-mate. For a consideration, it will graciously assign you a cabin to yourself. Fate has always doomed me to cross the Atlantic at the very time when everybody wanted to do the same thing, and I have never been million-airish enough to treat myself to solitude.

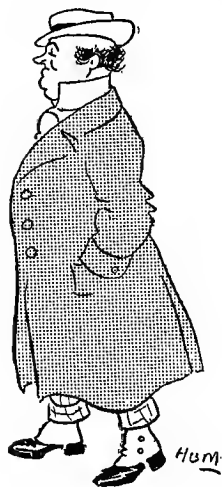
The room-mate for me has loomed perpetually! The various steamship companies have chosen mates for me with a sweet and graceful lack of discrimination that has touched my heart. I have never selected my own companions, nor have I ever known until the solemn moment of "Now I lay me down to sleep" the style of my associates. At first I used to be nervous and apprehensive. Being a dramatic critic—by trade!—I foresaw my room-mates as revengeful actors or vindictive managers, on board for the express purpose of murdering me as I slept the sleep of the unjust. I pictured my own helpless-

ness as, alone with these owners of grievances, I was left completely at their mercy—rocked, of course, in the cradle of the deep.

On one occasion my fears were so cruel that two days before sailing I went to the steamship company, and stated my case. "Give me anybody!" I cried pitifully. "Let my companion be a bunco-steerer, a confidence man, or an absconding bank president, but do not jostle me with an actor. If you happen to have any unobtrusive murderer on your list, let him room with me, please. I prefer it. It is an idiosyncrasy of mine."

Since I have grown older and wiser—but alas! not richer—I have approached the room-mate with less horror. I go to my stateroom and beam effulgently

upon the wretch who has appropriated all the pegs, most of the cupboards, and all the trunk space underneath the berths—besides having his hat-boxes, suit-cases, and hampers decorating the spot intended for my occupancy. Good nature exudes from the pores of my skin. I love my room-mate. You see, he is a fellow-creature. I say that to myself several times—"He is a fellow creature—he is a fellow creature."



The fellow creature scowls at

me as I appear, so merry and debonair. He is unpacking. He is not prepared to meet me. I murmur a few graceful words to the effect that I shall have occasion each night to snatch some minutes of happy sleep in that particular stateroom. I put it very delicately. I never say right out and brutally: "You are my room-mate!"

He is usually very much shocked to see me there. In his eyes, I am a leper. He continues his unpacking, and evidently thinks that we shall be at sea for six months, for his worldly goods seem endless. He looks at me disagreeably and says: "Small quarters for two."

But I am frightfully merry, and refuse to be dismayed. I say joyously: "Oh, I daresay we can get along. You'll never know I'm in the room. It isn't a bad room, either. I've been in many worse"—



which is strictly true. However bad the room may be, I have been in worse.

Then he says: "You don't snore, do you?"

That always "gets" me. If a man knew that he snored, surely he would desist from such an atrocious practice. Snoring seems to be some ugly manifestation of the subliminal, and a man is not responsible for his subliminal. So many room-mates have told me that I don't snore, that I am at least entitled to say that I don't. And *they* usually do! They seem to be crossing the ocean just to snore.

However, I tell my interrogator that I have never snored in my life, and let him know my opinion of snorers. As a race, snorers should be sequestered. There is no hope for them. They are blots on the fair face of—Morpheus. I might almost call them



freckles on that benign countenance. Anti-snoring inventions are of no avail. I once knew a man who, at the instigation of his lawful wife, bought an anti-snorer, and went to sleep with it carefully adjusted to his nose. In the middle of the night, the family arose, and assembled solemnly in the dining-room. The snoring of the luckless man was like the frantic wail of a lost soul. In a procession, they went to his room, tore off the anti-snorer,

and buried it next morning in the garden. After that, his normal snoring sounded like heavenly music.

"I suppose you don't read at night?" continues my jolly cross-examiner, "because I can't sleep with the light on."

Of course I read at night. That is the very time when I do read. I select a "popular" novel, and it always sends me to sleep. Give me a comfortable bed, and the latest work of Marie Corelli or Hall Caine, and insomnia is routed, unless I happen to have spoiled the night by a snooze at the Metropolitan Opera House. (I usually promise myself to keep awake at the Metropolitan, but I am sorely tempted, and I fall—asleep.)

"I do not read at sea," I say sorrowfully, perceiving the sourness of the grapes. "I just tumble into my bunk, and am asleep before you can say knife."

He looks as though he would like to do more than *say* knife, but he unblocks the way and lets me in. I tell him my name and as much of my pedigree as I dare. He accepts these credentials, which are really no better than the "written reference" of cooks, and does not argue. Then, if I want the port-hole open, he prefers it closed; if I suggest shutting the door, he hankers for it to be left on the hook; if I ask that a ray of light be left, so that I may know where I am—which is sometimes necessary—he has an unconquerable craving for pitch darkness.

Throughout the trip, I feel like an intruder, and

am always apologising for being alive. I steal out to a furtive bath in the morning while he is snoring. I rush back, and dress, while he is still snoring, and I try to avoid him during the day. Usually, just before landing, he tells me how glad he is to have met me, and gives me his card. He has grown accustomed to me. He will miss my merry moods, and my boyish prattle.

It is much more difficult to pursue these tactics of self-effacement when the agony is doubled, and there are two room-mates. Still, I am such a stoic, that even this fails to daunt me. My plan is this: to delay my appearance until the two have met, and have begun to loathe each other. I deliberately keep away from my stateroom—or their stateroom—until I am convinced that the worst has happened. Then I burst in upon them like a beautiful vision. They are both arranged on their shelves for the night, like bric-à-brac, and I have the floor to myself. While they do not look as pleased to see me as I could wish, their recumbent position puts them at a disadvantage. They have usually appropriated every available space in the room, but as they are lying there helpless, I gently remove their things, and hang up my own, while I discourse airily on glittering generalities. It is certainly a very fine boat, I say, as I take a coat from *my* peg, and substitute one of my own; the Captain seems to think that it will be an extremely good trip, I murmur, as I remove a pair of reluctant

trousers from *my* rack, and diffidently place my own there; and—er—this line takes such excellent care of passengers, I tell them, as I dump all my collars and ties in the little drawer, that my unselfish associates have destined for their own. They watch me with wakeful eyes, but each mate seems afraid of the other. I find that this scheme works splendidly. I am gentle but very firm—tender, yet masterful.

It is an odd predicament, when you come to analyse it. Here we are, three absolute strangers, jostled into unwilling intimacy, by the exigencies of the Atlantic Ocean. On *terra firma* such a condition of things would be not only incongruous, but ribald. The fact that there is water, instead of land, beneath us, has given two unknown men the right to listen to me, as I talk pleasantly in my sleep, and chatter unconsciously of my past.

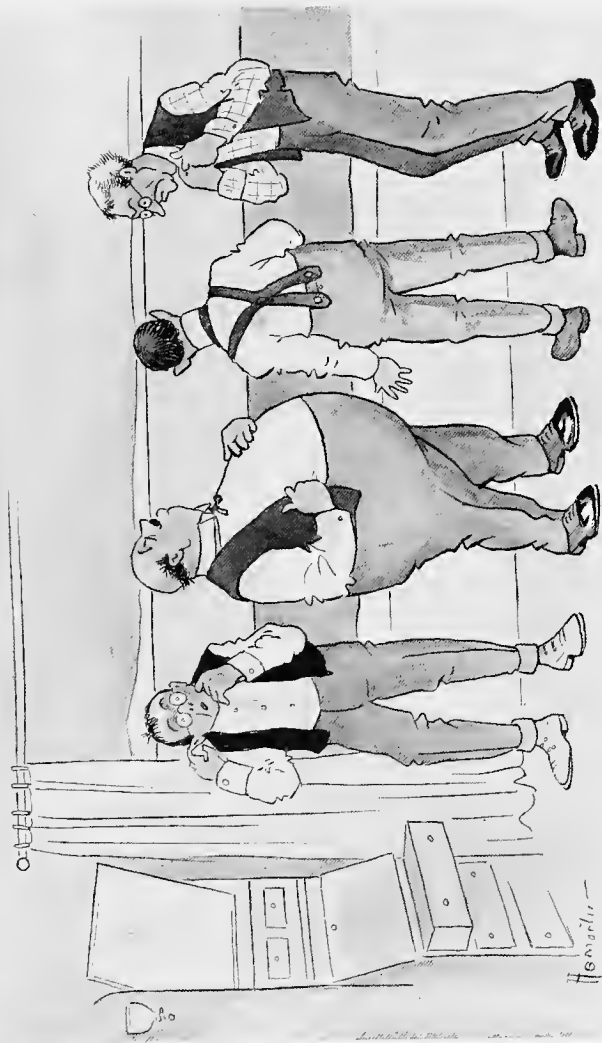
Once, and once only, was I one of a joyous quartet, on a steamship announcing as a specialty "large airy staterooms amidships." On that occasion, even my sense of humour was routed, and I was a grave and soured man travelling from England to the United States with three fellow creatures, even graver and more soured. When the four berths were "up" the large and airy stateroom could easily have been covered by one of my favourite pocket-handkerchiefs. When the four of us stood up at the same time in the stateroom, it seemed like a dense crowd in the subway, and I used to look for a strap from the ceil-

ing to hang on to! I missed the voice of the genial conductor, crying "Step lively!"

One of us was a clergyman, very much oppressed by his close quarters, and inclined to worry a good deal more about his body than about his soul. There was literally no room for souls. The minister had never before crossed amid such surroundings. (He looked at us so that we could not mistake his meaning. *We* were the surroundings.) He took great trouble to explain that he had intended booking by the *Kronprinz*, the *Kaiser Wilhelm*, or the *Lusitania*, but at the last moment his physician had recommended him a slow steamer. He wanted us to know

—and it certainly was not his fault if we didn't know—that he had never journeyed on one of these boats before. I mildly suggested that, even on this line, he might have had a deck stateroom. He was prepared for that suggestion. He had applied for a deck stateroom. There were none left. Having explained his unwilling presence in our midst, he proceeded to make the worst of it!





"It seemed like a dense crowd in the subway"

You will always meet people on slow lines who carefully apologise for being there. They are impelled to right themselves in your eyes, and to excuse themselves for herding with you. They would hate you to think that motives of economy have prompted their selection of a slow boat. Curiously enough, I always *do* think that, judging their motives by my own. Most people on board ship like you to think of them with the richest thoughts possible. It is one of the oddities of ocean travel. Personally, I see no earthly object in being thought wealthier than I am—not! So I was the lowly one of this par-



ticular quartet. Even the drummer—who travelled “for hose”—was inclined to be a trifle affluent, and retired for the night in silk pajamas, while I took to my bunk in pure cotton!

It was not a cosy crossing. I used to try and imagine that I was an Italian day-labourer, living in a tenement house on the east-side, and I believe that this was very good exercise for my imagination. Dressing in the morning was rather precarious, unexpected, and amusing. I often found myself in the clergyman's shirt, or on the verge of donning the drummer's trousers. The fourth passenger was the safest. He was a very fat person, and his clothes belonged to him, and to nobody else. We took no liberties with his apparel.



Fortunately we were all robust, and well. Luckily, we spent no more time in our “airy stateroom amidships” than was absolutely necessary. We took no naps in the afternoon. We indulged in no prolonged matutinal snoozes. We came down from our shelves, like animated ornaments, and stayed down. It seemed delightful to meet people on deck who were not room-mates. I never before realised how interesting a fellow can be when he is somebody else's room-mate.

The room-mate is also feminine—

for feminine passengers. By acute research I have discovered that their grim satire is increased by the translation to the other sex. The harrowing stories told by room-mated women have led me to believe that, after all, the room-mated man is not so much to be pitied. In the solemnity of the stateroom, the feminine passenger chafes as she is overlooked. Nowadays, when the travelling woman is a work of art, one hates to think of the unfortunate girl who is dispassionately watched by a room-mate as she combs out her "puffs," applies a fascinating "glint" to her perfect tresses, and removes the stress of wind and wave from her complexion. Solitude—utter solitude—is what she clamours for, and behold the poor thing is boxed up in unsought intimacy with—perhaps—a Massachusettsian schoolmarm or one of



the gentle, purring, silver-tongued members of the W. C. T. U.

It seems to me that the frivolous young thing who creates havoc among the masculine passengers on an ocean-liner is invariably associated in her stateroom with the gaunt New England spinster who believes in nature unadorned, and considers titivation to be lacking in the first elements of respectability. Picture the juxtaposition of the chorus girl and the suffragette! Imagine the dear promixity of a serio-comic and a temperance-lecturer! These odd stateroom companionships frequently occur. The steamship companies never worry. They are very sweet, and unselfish, and optimistic about it. To the practical steamship company, a room-mate is but a room-mate, just as in the Wordsworthian poem:



A primrose by a river's brim
A yellow primrose was to him,
And it was nothing more.

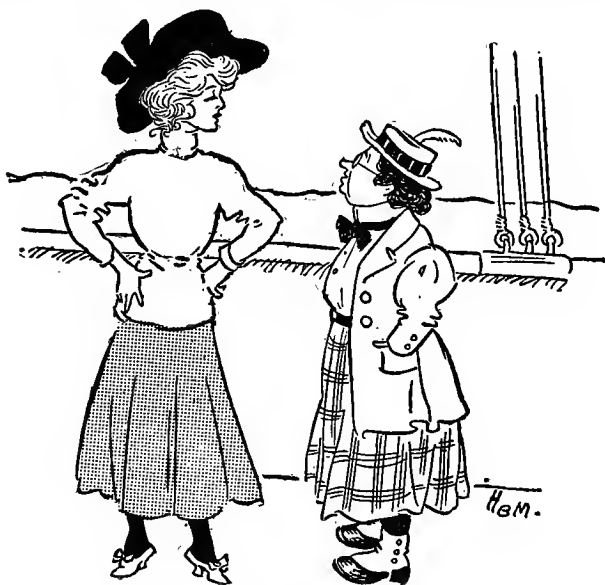
In the offices of the steamship companies the room-mate is neither comedy, tragedy, farce, nor melodrama. He is just room-mate, or human ballast. Try and think of yourself as ballast, and all will be well with you, and your days will be long and happy on the ocean trip. This may be difficult, but that which man has done, man may do. Man *has* done

it. I have. I have posed as one-hundred-and-forty pounds of ballast during several months of my busy life.

Crossing from Rotterdam to New York, recently, I met a lady whom I knew very few. She came on board at Boulogne, quite late at night. She wore a look of haggard distress, and could scarcely find time to ask me how I was, or say how pleased she was to meet me. She stood quite still as she reached the deck, and enquired of me most imperiously:

“Have you seen Miss Myers?”

At first I thought this was a riddle, or a “catch,” and I am awfully bad at riddles and “catches.” I



said nothing, declining to compromise myself, or betray my ignorance. But the lady—I shall call her Mrs. Kelly—looked so ominous and serious that I was puzzled.

“Who is Miss Myers?” I asked.

“Oh, I don’t know,” she replied. “I wish I did. I’m so tired. I’ve been traipsing about Boulogne all afternoon, waiting for this wretched boat. I should love to go to bed, but I must see Miss Myers. Who is she?”

“Probably the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Myers,” I said flippantly.

“Don’t!” cried Mrs. Kelly. “Don’t! Oh, I must find Miss Myers. Do please see if you can discover her. Ask the stewards; search well, and bring her to me. I will wait here.”

An awful idea that Miss Myers must be some desperate character, who had perhaps been trying to murder Mrs. Kelly, flashed through my mind. I ran off, and hunted for her. There was an enormous crowd on board; the passages were lined with incoming trunks. All the stewards were busy, and not at all inclined to discuss Miss Myers. I found the Captain and implored him to tell me the truth about Miss Myers. I promised to cherish his secret. The Captain seemed to think that I was an escaped lunatic. High and low I sought for Miss Myers. I read labels on steamer chairs, and got down on my knees to decipher legends on trunks. It was no use,

and I had to give up the search. It was quite impossible.

Mrs. Kelly was still standing where I had left her. As she saw me approaching, she leaped forward, and exultantly cried: "You have found Miss Myers! You have found Miss Myers!"

I broke the news as delicately as I could. I had



not found Miss Myers; in fact I believed that Miss Myers was like Mrs. 'Arris—there "wasn't no sich person."

"But there is—there is!" Mrs. Kelly almost wept. "They told me about her in London. They told me about her in Paris. They told me about her in Boulogne. I have dreamed of her, and dreaded her. The very thought of her drives me wild——"

Then, and then only, it dawned upon me that my poor friend, Mrs. Kelly, was mad—mad as a March-hare! Pleasure—European pleasure—had unhinged her reason.

“Never mind,” I said gently, trying to humour her. “Never mind. Perhaps there *is* a Miss Myers, but she won’t hurt you. I will see that she does not. She is probably a very sweet girl, and she has forgiven you. Yes, I am sure that she has forgiven you. She has decided that revenge would be foolish and un-Christian. She is fond of you—I know she is—and when you see her, just shake hands with her, and say that you have determined to bury the hatchet.”

“Her Christian name is Edith,” murmured Mrs. Kelly.

“And a very pretty name, too,” I remarked, still trying to humour her. “I love the name of Edith. ‘Edith Myers’—it is euphonious. Now if I were you, I should go to bed, and to-morrow you will feel better and more like yourself.”

“Don’t be idiotic,” said Mrs. Kelly peevishly, and rather rudely, I thought. “I won’t go to bed. This Myers woman is my room-mate, and I’m not going to undo myself, and look a sight, for a strange woman to come in and laugh at. I’ll stay up until I find her. I begged the company for a room alone, but it was impossible. All they could give me was a small cabin with Miss Myers, and”—here Mrs. Kelly tried to keep back the tears—“I’m a stout woman. I may

even say that I'm a fat woman. I need space, and plenty of it. Suppose—suppose—Miss Myers is also fat. What then? What does the company care? What redress have I?"

I am sorry to say that I laughed. I hated myself for laughing. My sympathetic nature, however, asserted itself quickly. I tried to unearth some of the balm that is popularly supposed to lurk in Gilead.

"She couldn't be fat, dear Mrs. Kelly," I said simply. "Why she is a girl; she is a 'miss'; it is absurd to imagine her fat—just because—er—you happen to be a bit plump. And 'Edith'—'Edith' is such a thin name. Oh, I feel sure that Miss Myers is a sylph; she may even be emaciated. Let me see you to your cabin, and introduce you."

She allowed me to accompany her along the passage to her stateroom. It was indeed a small "inside" apartment, with two berths. On a camp-stool were letters addressed to Miss Edith Myers; there was no other indication of her existence.

"You see!" cried Mrs. Kelly, in dismal triumph. "She'll come in at midnight, or later, and I shall be in my bunk looking



odious, with my hair in crimpers, and cream on my face. I always put cream on my face before retiring, and it looks so slippery and dreadful. Why shouldn't a respectable woman turn in at a decent hour? But perhaps she isn't respectable. I don't believe she is. She may be up in the smoke-room carousing. Do go and see."

I persuaded Mrs. Kelly to forget Miss Myers, and left her, eyeing the letters with sinister gaze. I appreciated her sentiments with regard to the roommate—especially as at that moment I had to go and inspect mine. Next morning, Mrs. Kelly told me that she had passed a sleepless night, waiting for Miss Myers, who never came. She insisted that she felt very much like Mariana of the Moated Grange—in fact even more so. Miss Myers' letters disappeared during the day. We spent hours seeking for her, but never found her.

That night Mrs. Kelly was told that she could have the cabin to herself, as Miss Myers had been able to accommodate herself elsewhere. Joy was written on her face, but it was tempered by the curious feminine streak of "cussedness" that, to the masculine mind, is so splendidly and so glitteringly illogical.

"I'm glad to get rid of the creature," she said. "Of course. But why the woman should avoid me like a plague, I don't know. I daresay she thinks I've some contagious disease. If I find her during the trip, I'll give her a piece of my mind. She might at

least have had the decency to come to me, and apologise——”

“Apologise?” I gasped. “What for?”

“Well, perhaps I should say explain,” corrected Mrs. Kelly. “An explanation was necessary. It would have been courteous. Still, I’m satisfied. I’m alone, at any rate. I always think that a woman travelling alone is pathetic, don’t you? I’d like to catch a glimpse of Miss Myers. Perhaps, after all, she was a nice, simple, unaffected young girl——”

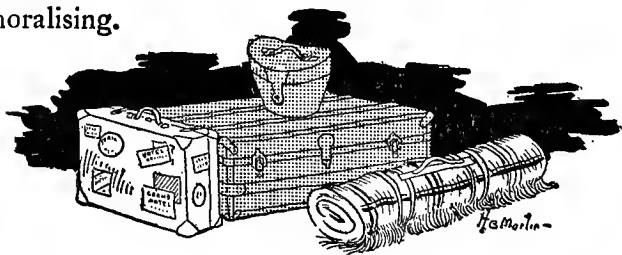
Consistency, thy name is woman!

“How many life-long friendships have resulted from the enforced companionship of the ocean-liner?” asks the sentimentalist. (Sentimentalists invariably ask pungent questions, and never wait for the answer.) To which I reply: perhaps, but not in the case of room-mates.

My room-mates-that-were cross my path persistently. I have met them at hotels, at theatres, in trains, and wherever men do congregate. I look at them sheepishly, and they return the look with more of the sheepish quality. I recall their little eccentricities, and those cunning little ways that the Atlantic Ocean brings out—like measles. I think of them, pajama’d and cranky, in the silence of the mid-Atlantic nights, and perhaps I nod haughtily, as I recognise them. Perhaps they do, too. They have the same benign thoughts of me that I have of them. Something we speak—of nothing in particular, and everything in general.

The ex-room-mate I meet at the theatre no longer says to me, "Do you snore?" I wonder, as I look at him, how he ever dared to ask me such a leading question. But he did dare. At the theatre, when we condescend to talk, we discuss the play in an impersonal manner. He is not even anxious to know whether I read at night. A life-long friendship with an ex-room-mate? Perish the thought. The mystery is lacking. The ideal is absent. Imagine being eternally with a man whom you first saw wobbling all over a rickety stateroom, and then beheld neatly tucked up in an abbreviated bunk, and aggressively clad in baby-blue for the night.

The ex-room-mate is a thing apart, and a memory. His materialisation would be vain, and quite unnecessary. You try to banish him from your life, as you see him for the last time, usually in the grip of the Custom House, perjuring his soul for all it is worth, and looking very fervid and uneasy about it. This is a fitting end to the room-mate. To meet him again in every-day life, to resurrect him, as it were, is an anti-climax. Life is full of anti-climaxes, but I respectfully submit that they are inartistic and demoralising.



III

PARTAKING OF NOURISHMENT



IF Lucullus could cross the Atlantic to-day, he would probably grumble, in picturesque discontent, at the "food." That is part of one's daily duty on board ship. Even though the splendidly thought-out and completely artistic dinners served on some of the liners would probably make the historical banquets of

Lucullus look like "thirty cents"—not excluding the famous repast at which Cæsar and Pompey surprised him—he would undoubtedly growl, as everybody growls, on the popular steamship. Lucullus would presumably think up something that was not on the bill of fare, and ask pathetically for that one

particular something, waxing extremely imperious and indignant if it were not forthcoming.

You can have more fun watching the gastronomic peculiarities of transatlantic passengers than you can obtain at a circus. The dining-room of an ocean steamship is a circus. The meals are arranged on the comfortable principle that every passenger is a *connoisseur*. It is a principle that lands the steamship companies in a veritable jungle of misunderstanding. For every *connoisseur* on board, there are ten barbarians, who do not demand artistic fare, but clamour merely for "food." They just want to "eat." They admit this. They say it. You will hear women, elegantly gowned, extremely be-jewelled, and obtrusively costly-looking, saying to each other, in dulcet tones: "Let's go down to the saloon, and eat."

This is, of course, very frank and accurate. They *do* want to "eat" because they are hungry. But I always think that mere eating is rather a nauseating process. It is an animal function that we are at least permitted to colour gracefully, and attune to the courtesies of life. As we "eat" in society, we might as well be as nice about it as possible. Pigs and cows "eat." Pigs and cows never breakfast, or lunch, or dine. Therefore *we* might as well do so—if only to distinguish ourselves from the pigs and cows.. Not that I am saying a word against or attempting to slight the pigs and cows. On the contrary, I like

them. But some of the things they do in *their* way I prefer to do differently in *mine*. That is all. Call me "uppish," if you will. I thoroughly enjoy observing the "eaters" on board ship, because they are so lovely, and so deliciously amusing. I am referring of course to the majority. A minority, in anything, is rarely entertaining, because it is absolutely correct.

Many transatlantic passengers—generally Americans—who are returning to the United States after a few months of European travel, impress you indelibly with the idea that they are going home only for food! This sounds absurd, but you can draw no other conclusions from the brilliant remarks that you hear at the table.

"Well, I shall be mighty glad to get back to good old New York," said a young man who sat opposite at table, last year. "Europe's all right. London and Paris know a few things. But I want some green corn from the cob, and I shan't do a thing to it when I get home. I tell you, old chap, you miss green corn in London and Paris. You never know what a great thing it is until you can't get it."

"You should have taken a quicker boat," I suggested, as I watched him looking quite hopelessly at a *suprême de volaille*. "You'll be a long time getting into green corn on this ship."

He talked green corn all the way to New York, and was very droll. It was his first trip abroad. He had "done" London, Paris, Berlin, Vienna, and Buda-

pest very completely, but he was miserable and home-sick. He was home-sick for green corn. Perhaps he had "loved ones" in New York. Very probably. These, however, appeared to count for little. The one thing that made life worth living seemed to be green corn. It was impossible to avoid that conclusion.

I sat beside a sweet little lassie from Pittsburg on one occasion. She had been through Italy—all the way through—and had spent several weeks in Venice. She was hung with corals. Wherever there was space on her person for a coral—there was the coral! She thought Italy "quite a country," and even went so far as to admit that in some things, Venice was prettier than Pittsburg.

"Just the same," she said cooingly, "I'm just crazy to get back. Venice is nice, but I couldn't stand the food. I can't wait till I see Pittsburg again, and get some of mommer's fried chicken. There's nothing like it in Italy. Mommer's fried chicken just melts in your mouth. I feel home-sick when I think of it."

Now, I wonder why this affectionate little thing didn't take mommer to Italy with her, not exactly as a chaperon, but as a chicken-frier. While this particular brand of fried chicken may be unknown in artistic Italy, it is a positive fact that chickens are quite plentiful there, and with mommer to fry them for her, the little Pittsburg lassie would not have



“ ‘I’ll tell you, old chap, you miss green corn in London and Paris’ ”

been so home-sick. It is dreadful to long, home-sick-ishly, for anything, but how exceedingly awful it must be to yearn hopelessly for fried chicken in a barbaric city like Venice. How odious it must be to see the uncivilised Italians (she called them Eyetalians) dining when you are simply pining to "eat!"

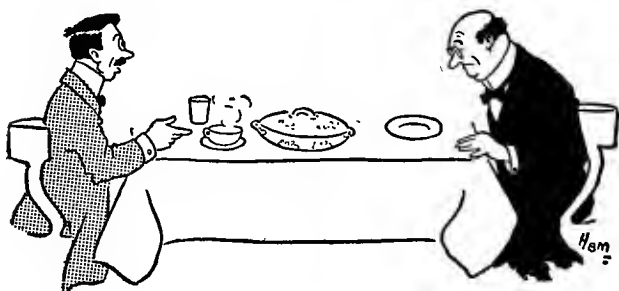
I met a youth who hated "the other side" because the buckwheat cakes were so inferior. He was terribly angry, and even threatening about it. He had "eaten" at the Carlton, in London, at Marguery's in Paris, at the Bristol in Vienna, and at Bertolini's in Naples, and they actually didn't know "the first thing" about "serving" buckwheat cakes. (I liked to hear him talk about "serving" buckwheat cakes, because I always think they should be thrown at you.) It was all very well to say that Europe was civilised. It was not. He was sure of it.

"It seems strange," he said, "but it is a positive fact that the buckwheat cakes I get in Canandai-gua, N. Y., are superior to any that I found in Europe. Gee! I shall be glad to get back again. Europe's a bunco-game."



I tried to draw him out, and to glean some faint idea of the artistic side of his trip. This was impossible. Europe had been entirely marred for him by its unseemly indifference to buckwheat cakes. If he could have made of buckwheat cakes a *casus belli*, he would certainly have done so. Of course it was dreadfully galling for the poor boy, but still, he has the remedy in his own hands. He need never move again from the cheering buckwheat cake.

People who come on board laden down with food



—on the principle that it is pious to take coals to Newcastle—add immensely to the jollity of the trip. They want you to think that the best an ocean steamship can do, isn't good enough for them, and that they can do better. They are most exhilarating.

I encountered one pleasing old gentleman on board who was freighted with an enormous hamper of red currants. He seemed to live for red currants,—life without them would be but an empty dream. He ap-

peared at each meal bearing a plate laden with the red currants that he set ostentatiously before him. At the end of the meal he carried away with him the currants that were left. The company had peaches, nectarines, and the most delicious fruits, for dessert. He wouldn't touch them. He ate his red currants in silent joy—never even passed them round. We all called him "Currants," and to this day I do not know him by any other name.

Many people who are regarded with awe as being tremendously "wealthy" travel with food. A Stock Exchange magnate and his family published the fact that they were accompanied by their own butter. Yes, they simply could not do without it. He had a valet, and it was the valet's duty to make the butter into "pats" every day, and put a "pat" at the plate of each member of the family in the saloon. The fare on this particular boat was sumptuous. I am quite willing to swear that it was finer than any that the Stock Exchange gentleman got in his own home. It went for nothing. Every member of this ultra-fastidious family talked butter, until you wished that such a commodity had never been invented. The valet was anxiously consulted as to whether he thought that the butter would last until they reached New York. I must confess that the valet was most optimistic. He persistently thought it would last.

Just before the close of the trip, I found myself getting peevish, apprehensive, and nervous. I was

afraid that they were coming to the end of the butter, and, honestly, I looked upon such a possibility as a calamity. The butter *did* last. If it had given out, I made up my mind to move to some other table. I could not have borne to sit idly and watch the bitter—not butter—human grief, the mental agony, and the tense, dry tragedy of those Stock Exchange people if their “pats” had given out. There are some events in life that are too harrowing.

One disgusted youth, travelling to New York, was wretched because the *menu* was in French. I suppose that he felt a bit petulant about his pronunciation, and was selfishly anxious to deprive the steward of wholesome, boyish fun. At any rate, when the bill of fare was presented to him, he tossed it angrily aside. He would give no order.

“Bring me any old thing!” he cried, and he never varied that cry.

To select “any old thing” from a bill of fare that included every new thing was something of a poser. Stew-



ards are, fortunately, not unfamiliar with cranks, and the steward on this occasion was an experienced person. He plied the disgruntled one with chops, and the disgruntled one always ate them. Chops are sure, and safe. Chops are a refuge for the gastronomically destitute. They respond quite appropri-

ately to the idea of "any old thing." This youth was very pleasant indeed, except at meal time. He was affable, smiling, chatty, amusing.

But his face clouded, his demeanour changed, his geniality vanished as the waiter appeared with the *menu*. He was a different man; he was Mr. Hyde instead of Dr. Jekyll, as he uttered those contemptuous, weary, and heart-broken words: "Bring me any old thing!"

Many untutored people in the steamship's saloon do all their ordering at once, and insist that everything shall be brought to them at the same time, and arranged symmetrically before them. You see them sitting before a formidable array of plates. This sort of diner can be defined as "a piece of humanity entirely surrounded by food." He has his soup, his fish, his meat, and "six kinds of dessert" all served at once, and draped around his "cover." He is festooned with nourishment. And as though his object in life were to avoid making one dish jealous of the other, he dips into each impartially. He has an ichthyosaurian stomach, and few preferences. He revels in the idea of plenty, and is most merry with his hard-working steward. This diner never misses stewed prunes. He is always careful to get full of prunes. They probably remind him of happy days—long since fled! Prunes are to the majority of unsophisticated diners what "lights" are to a cat. There are other things, of course—good, useful, di-

gestible, pretty things, but prunes are something wistful and essential; they seem to appeal to a better nature, to a finer and more exalted outlook. Woe to the ocean liner that sails from port without prunes! It will never sail pruneless again. The European indifference to prunes drives many travellers home. While prunes may be obtained abroad, they are not served with the same solemnity and the careful consideration that travelling Americans demand. The prune abroad is not a rite, but just a—plum!

Sometimes passengers seem quite normal and human until they reach the dining saloon. Then their normality vanishes, and the curiosities of their nature come out for an airing. You never really know a man until you have seen him at table. You may think that you do, but you—don't. I remember crossing with a silk merchant from Passaic, New Jersey, who seemed to be bubbling over with the milk of human kindness—or, at any rate, rustling with its silk. He was one of the liveliest men on board—anxious to know and commune with everybody, and interested in everything. All this was changed in the dining saloon.

"I want three things every morning," he said to the table steward at the first meal, "and I shall insist upon getting them. Bring me hot tea, hot milk, and a hot cup. Remember those three things: Hot tea, hot milk, hot cup, and see that they are never missing."

The table steward showed no surprise. Any table steward who is surprised at anything at sea would be useless. He went away and returned with hot tea, warm milk, and a cold cup. The rage of the silk merchant knew no bounds. Had some dreadful catastrophe happened, he could scarcely have been more upset.

"How dare you?" he cried indignantly, as he felt all around the cold cup, and put his finger in the milk. "Go heat that cup, and boil that milk—or I'll report you."

The next morning there was another cyclone. The cup was merely warm, the tea just tepid, and the milk boiling. The irate passenger stormed. We tried to talk to, and soothe him, but he was frantic. He was insane on the subject of hot tea, hot milk, hot cup. Out of the saloon, he could converse agreeably on any topic. He was a good-humoured, genial soul. At luncheon and at dinner he was affability personified, but at breakfast he was a devil rampaging around his mania.

It grew so awful—for the luckless table steward invariably went wrong—that we used to try to get to the breakfast table late, after the hot tea, hot milk, hot cup melodrama had been acted. Sometimes we arrived in time to find him sitting in silent gloom, glowering. He was plunged in a terrible taciturnity. The cup had been chilly! Often we got there to discover that he was waiting in sickening expectancy for

the tea that had been lacking in fervour. He declined to speak to us. Once I am prepared to testify that I saw tears of vexation coursing down his cheeks. I tried personal remonstrance with the steward. I took him aside, and implored him for all our sakes to be merciful, and to see that the cup was well baked.

"It's 'ard to 'eat a cup," was his invariable excuse.

This passenger was travelling alone. He had left his wife and children in Passaic—lucky folks! Possibly he was a fond father, and a doting husband—except at breakfast time, that terrifying period when the obsession of hot tea, hot milk, hot cup made a fiend of him. I can imagine his wife saying as she saw his ship sailing away: "Now at last we can un-heat the cups!"

Breakfast is a very trying meal anywhere. On board ship it is particularly cranky. Most people feel a trifle fractious after having been mewed up all night in a closet. They are compelled to enter the saloon and talk platitudes under these circumstances. It always pains me to see people *dining* at breakfast time—partaking hungrily of half a dozen indigestible courses, while I look askance at a cup of coffee. I hate my fellow creatures at breakfast time. I can scarcely conceal my contempt for the slip of a girl who gets away with a cereal, a ham omelette, a beefsteak, buckwheat cakes, fruit, jam, and hot bread, and then complains that she never has an appetite on board ship. I am always itching to insult the portly

matron who reels off an order for fish, "kidney stoo," ham-and-eggs, cold tongue, pressed beef, and fancy breads, wondering all the time why she can't enjoy her food like other people! They promise themselves a tonic when they land—a tonic, mind you, *not* an emetic!

This sort of thing does not worry me a bit on land. At sea, it always seems indecent, and unfit for publication. Hungry people in the morning look so brazen, and so unashamed. I often wonder why these breakfast-diners do not take wine with their food, or appear in evening dress. They look so silly, in morning garb, eating a hearty dinner for breakfast! A coarse dinner is surely a coarse breakfast. These people are always talking ailments. They dote on ailments. They can discuss the fifty-seven varieties of dyspepsia, and can paint pleasing pictures of life at Carlsbad and Marienbad—those resorts of penitent gluttons. They go everywhere for their health. They are on board for their health. They know the precise effect of different brands of sea-air on their system. This resort is bracing; that is enervating; a third is a tonic; a fourth is anti-this-or-the-other. You make a mental list of the places they have *never* visited, and resolve to visit them. They must be the desirable resorts.

You meet the weirdest kinds of gastronomic tastes on board ship, and you marvel at the abnormality of seemingly normal men and women. A year ago,

there was a very pretty girl from St. Louis, sitting beside me at table. She was as nice as she was pretty, but she was insane. She was insane on the subject of Camembert cheese. She had it for breakfast; at luncheon she mixed it with her prunes; at dinner she ate it in meringue and with ice-cream. She was very fond of it with jam and marmalade.

About the third day out, I began to dread Camembert cheese. You may say that I need not have looked at this girl—nobody asked me to look.—That is quite true. Camembert cheese, however, can be perceived without the eyes, and usually it is. She was very particular about it. She liked it ripe, and mellow—and at that stage Camembert is at its chattiest. She refused to accept it if it were hard and silent. She was a well-bred girl. We used to discuss the classics, while she toyed with the Camembert, and this grew to be somewhat unpleasant. In fact, I began to wish that I had been a plumber, and could have talked drains. Many a time did I endeavour to joke her away from her Camembert fetich. The scheme never worked. She laughed with me, and was jocund and light-hearted, but she was eating Camembert cheese until we landed in New York, and is probably eating it now.

Never expect to escape from the fiend who has three soft-boiled eggs broken into a large glass goblet, under your very eyes. You will never be able to avoid this barbarian, for he is on board every steam-

ship. Sometimes I think that steamship companies engage him just to make passengers feel that they are really at sea. At any rate, he always seems to be actuated by a solemn sense of duty!

If you are feeling quite well, the boiled-egg fiend does not suggest such marked criminality; if you are pettishly inclined at breakfast, you cut him dead, and refuse to respond to his perfunctory "Good-morning!" He orders the three eggs soft-boiled, and then requests the steward to break them into a goblet, while he looks on unabashed. The splash of those eggs as they fall, with a sickening thud, into the goblet becomes so familiar to you that you would know it anywhere. They are then stirred up with a lump of butter and pepper and salt until the goblet is yellow, opaque, sticky and hideous. There is triumph on the face of this fiend as he begins his operations—a triumph like that popularly believed to be felt by little Jack Horner, when he put in his thumb, and pulled out a plum, and said "What a good boy am I!"

I believe in friendship, and suppose that I have as many friends as most men who can afford such luxuries. But if I caught my best friend—companion of my childhood's days—associate of my adolescence—sitting before a goblet of stagnant soft-boiled eggs on board ship, I should promptly decide that henceforth we meet as strangers. There are some things that it is difficult to forgive and forget.

One of the tenets of my gastronomic faith is that eggs should never be eaten in public at any time. You may *guess* that your friend has had eggs for breakfast by the traces they always leave—traces that can never be mistaken. But it is better not to know for sure—not to catch him *in flagrante delictu*.

On one of the big German boats, where every meal served in the saloon is a banquet, and where you are plied with all the delicacies that human ingenuity has invented, passengers were confronted with what was called a "Ritz-Carlton restaurant" on the upper deck. People could patronise this restaurant if they cared to do so, by paying enormous prices for the privilege. The fare in the saloon was so sumptuous, however, that you could not conceive of any epicure demanding anything better. But this "Ritz-Carlton restaurant" was supposed to be better because it involved extra cost. And it was always crowded! One's sense of humour was immensely tickled by the ostentatious enthusiasm for the "Ritz-Carlton," and the particular pains that the patrons thereof took to let you know that they really "couldn't stand" the saloon.

"I never *did* like a general dining-room," said the wife of a big "dry-goods" man (she was big, the man was big, and the "dry-goods" were big). "One doesn't like to sit with a hungry crowd, all so food-y and oppressive. One loves to be exclusive *sometimes*. I am taking all my meals at the Ritz-Carlton—even

breakfast. Expensive? *Of course.* The price keeps the rabble out."

There were gold knives and forks in this restaurant; gold cruets, gold fruit-dishes. I do not know if any of the utensils were studded with precious stones, but I daresay that they were. In mid-ocean, the diners in the "Ritz-Carlton" were observed in all the ecstasy of "full evening dress" wending their way along the slippery decks to this Mecca. The women wore low-cut gowns, and huge hats pinnacled with feathers; the men were arrayed in all the glories of Solomon. On a foggy night in "the roaring forties" this struck me as so humorous, that I was happy for the evening. The diners sat for hours in their delightful exclusiveness.

"I love it," one Johnnie confided in me, as he emerged from his floating lobster-palace, to the cold, wet, wobbly deck. "It makes me think that I'm in dear old Forty-Second Street, after the show."

"Why do you bother to go three thousand miles away from dear old Forty-Second Street, if you love it so, and you own such an affectionate nature?" I ventured to ask.

"Just to love it all the more when I return to it," he said. "Absence makes the heart grow fonder, and in the meantime, this reminds me of it. It is so like it—the lights, the beautifully gowned women, the jewels, the flowers, the music, and the *civilisation*."

The civilisation! I gasped. Here was a human object who could find no grandeur in the imprecations of the usually indignant Atlantic; who could weave no imaginings from the endless waste of sky and sea in all their variations; who could think no marvels of the human skill that had made possible this vast association of men and women in the midst of this heaving expanse of water. Here was a mental pigmy whose only object in travel was to awaken memories of Forty-Second Street, and whose soul soared no higher than a lobster palace!

The restaurant on this ship brought out eccentricities in a thick rash. There were passengers on board who used to peep in awe through the windows of the "Ritz-Carlton restaurant," and talk in amazement of its garish splendours. There were first-cabin passengers who said they had the "steerage feeling" because they were doomed to the mere banquets in the saloon, where there were no gold dishes, no gold cruets, no gold fruit plates. Many who had paid fabulous prices for accommodation felt like beggars as they watched the glitter of luxury in this "latest innovation." Nobody amounted to anything unless he had "shown himself" at the "Ritz-Carlton." The restaurant established another "class," and a very rigidly defined class. There were intellectual people on this ship—poets, dramatists, novelists, lecturers. They were quite "out of it." They did not take their meals from gold plates in the "Ritz-Carl-

ton." They partook of a feeble dinner of twelve courses in the meagre dining-room. They were humble. They felt the sting of their humility.

There were even "Ritz-Carlton" children who wouldn't condescend to "play" with mere saloon children. They were delightful little snobs. The "Ritz-Carlton" juveniles were so atrociously funny that I am hoping I may meet some of them when they have grown up. They will assuredly be gorgeously entertaining. These mites talked of nothing but money and gold and diamonds. One sweet little girl had been promised a hundred dollars if she abstained from eating candy during the trip—instead of being threatened with a good spanking if she *did* eat it.

And not very far from this gathering of obtrusive money-vulgarians was the steerage, with its herd of crushed yet hopeful exiles; its mob of misery-steeped wretches; its gangs of palpitating expatriates—a dull, drab streak of poverty on a luminous picture of lurid luxury. The contrast was so sharp that it arose and smote you. There was the one extreme and there was the other—and which was the more pitiful? They were both collected on the same bits of wood and iron; both tossed by the same waves and billows at the same time—yet as distant as though belonging to two different worlds. Mercifully separated, however! The Johnnie who hankered for Forty-Second Street could not see the burly Teuton at the other end of the boat, anxious to carve a belated career for him-

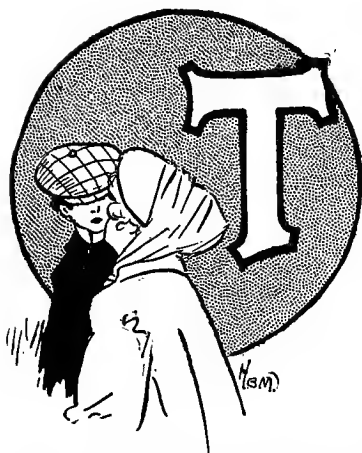
self out of the marble blocks of the New World. The dingy, soiled and tousled Russian, crouched in his niche in the steerage, did not perceive his proximity to the loiterer in "full evening dress" clamouring for the garishness of metropolitan inertia on an ocean steamship. They were so near, but yet so far.

Comedy and tragedy on the ocean-liner, as in real life, jostle each other perpetually. They tread on each other's corns even in the dining saloon, where you would be willing to swear that humour alone exists in gayest form.



IV

WHO'S WHO ON BOARD



THE passenger list is an important document setting forth barely and with laconic precision the names of your associates on the ocean trip. All biographical details are withheld so that you are kept busy during the entire voyage ferreting them out. The passenger

list is a very old institution, and it has not kept pace with modern improvements. It is really the same to-day as it was twenty years ago—the same uncommunicative and unsatisfactory chronicle of mere names. Now, if you read your Baedeker, you will discover that the compiler of that flippant and exciting record is not satisfied with merely recording the names of the hotels in the towns of visited countries, and leaving you in hopeless befuddlement at the endless array of resting-places. Baedeker places an asterisk opposite each hotel that it guarantees to be first-class. That, of course, is a great relief. You

read that Baedeker declares a certain hotel to be first-class and—er—you don't go there.

But on the passenger list no names are asterisked. The steamship companies do not guarantee the quality of their passengers, which it would be an easy thing to do. Instead of consulting a judicious "Who's Who" and carefully labelling any passengers who have done anything that wasn't worth doing, they pay no attention to pedigree or to social standing. The passenger list is distinctly inferior to Baedeker. It is very cold, dispassionate, and formal. The very best people are set down cheek-by-jowl with the nobodies. There is not a line on any passenger list to show that Mr. Jones has paid fifteen hundred dollars for a suite on the upper deck. His name is as unmarked as is that of Mr. Smith who is occupying a berth in a stateroom containing four, and who is paying the minimum rate. Such democracy is of course deplorable. At the opera, for instance, you know unerringly where anybody of any consequence is sitting. Exclusive people are properly treated—by having their exclusiveness painlessly removed. But on an ocean-liner you can be a multi-millionaire, if you like, and the passenger list will not announce the fact.

This is, naturally, very galling. It is unbearable. What is the use of being anybody if nobody knows it? Why extract a week from the delightful publicity of land-life, and sink it in the obscurity of ocean life? Lights that are hidden under bushels are very sad

lights indeed. To be nobody for a whole week is dispiriting.

However, efforts have been made to circumvent the passenger list, and with some show of success. By means of these well-conceived efforts it is possible to obtain some faint inkling of the value of your associates. You see on the passenger list, for instance: "Mr. and Mrs. Robinson, and three children," and you sniff contemptuously at the bald and poverty-stricken announcement, for below, you discover something far more winning, and worth while, in this style:

Mr. Ponsonby-Snooks
and valet

Mrs. Ponsonby-Snooks
and maid

Miss Margaret Ponsonby-Snooks

Miss Pianjela Ponsonby-Snooks

Master Ormsby Ponsonby-Snooks
and two nurses
and governess.

Now that catches your eye immediately. You cannot overlook it. It has warmth, colour, fervour, and appreciation. It is "getting even" with the passenger list, with a vengeance. Mr. Ponsonby-Snooks, having tripped across the Atlantic for years, has realised of course that something must be done, for his wife's sake, and for the sake of those dear children, on whose transparent, juvenile minds impressions are made that can never be erased. Your first day,

as the steamer settles down to business, is to sort out the Ponsonby-Snookes, as important people worth cultivating, *if* they will allow you to cultivate them. You forget "Mr. and Mrs. Robinson and three children" who are plebeian enough to cross the ocean without maids and valets—who, in fact, are "doing the thing" cheaply, which is always contemptible in the eyes of those who are doing it, perhaps, more cheaply.

It is, of course, rather difficult to get the Ponsonby-Snooks party properly sifted out. Perhaps you spend an entire morning talking with the passenger whom you have labelled "Ponsonby-Snooks"; you have decided that he is delightfully free-and-easy, and charmingly democratic for one so potent, when it is borne in upon you that the person you have buttonholed is Mr. Ponsonby-Snooks' valet. This is irritating, and you promptly cut the valet, who is inclined to be fearfully friendly next time you meet him on deck. The effort to discover Mrs. Ponsonby-Snooks may be equally trying. After having promenaded the deck all morning with the lady—as you fondly thought—being careful to let all the other passengers see you, it gets on your nerves to learn that you have been prowling around with the nurse. There is nothing more prostrating to the really democratic mind!

You are quite sure that you are no snob, but you *do* like to know the best people. You are all crowded together on an ocean steamer, and there is

no reason on earth why you should not improve the shining hour. If you become very friendly with them at sea, you will be able to visit them on land. This exquisite fallacy is always rife on an Atlantic liner. It is exploded every time you meet your chatty sea-friends in town, and they cut you as dead as a door-nail, but it grows again—like a wart—next time you cross.

People with titles of any kind, wear them pleasingly on the steamship. There is the baronet, whose handle comes out well on the list, and there are all sorts of American titles. There is the "Hon." So-and-So, which is misleading but nice; there are "Judge" and "Colonel" and "General" and "Doctor." The last is lowest in the social scale, for it may apply to a chiropodist, or to an ordinary dentist, but is distinctly better than nothing at all on a passenger list that is depressingly mute on the subject of calling and standing.

For two whole days the passengers are busy with the passenger list. They sit poring over it, and trying to "place" people. Often as you pass, you hear somebody say, "Oh, *that* must be So-and-So," and a mark is made opposite your name. Your secret is discovered. You see people running around and reading the labels on unoccupied steamer-chairs, and sometimes waiting until the occupants thereof appear. If you should happen to be sitting in the "Judge's" steamer-chair, you will be looked upon as the



“Judge” until that gentleman appears to rout you out.

A great difficulty is that labels on steamer-chairs are hidden when people are sitting on them. This is a bitter disappointment. You cannot go up to a perfect stranger and say, “Kindly move your head as I want to see who you are.” You are obliged to wait until meal-time, when he usually goes below. When there is a crowd on board, this is very annoying. I do not say that it is impossible, for nothing is impossible if you set your mind to it. If steamship companies cared to do the right thing, they would have the legend on each steamer-chair placed high above the head of the passenger—and illuminated at night. This innovation would be dearly appreciated by a crowd that is largely composed of the type popularly known as “rubberneck.”

It is wonderful how quickly passenger gossip travels on the liner. A mere hint as to the identity of a certain person is known in a few minutes from one end of the ship to the other. Unintentionally, you your-

self may spread gossip, and realise afterwards your infamy. I saw a young couple very much engrossed in each other. Her wedding ring *looked* new, and just for the sake of saying something, I remarked to a comrade, "Look at that honeymoon couple. They seem happy."

That man and woman had never done me any harm. Yet I had labelled them. All that morning, nobody talked of anything but that honeymoon couple. People got up, and walked past them just to take a look. All sorts of romances were woven around them. She was an heiress, and he was eloping with her. Everybody remembered reading about them in the papers the day before we sailed. Their case was threshed out for hours. Unfortunately they were not honeymooners. She was married, with a husband on board, ill in his stateroom. He was similarly situated with an indisposed wife. The four of them were all travelling together, and the non-ill ones were making the best of the situation. They had to explain this. The explanation was forced upon them by the "rubbernecks," instigated by my thoughtless stupidity!

Honeymoon couples are great boons to the ocean traveller. All the world loves a lover, and at sea all the world leads him a nice life! One would think that sensible honeymooners—provided that they exist—would avoid the ocean steamer like a plague. If they reason at all, they probably argue that a week

spent away from everybody they know will be recreative and appropriate. They see themselves among a crowd of strangers, and their newly wedded hearts rejoice and are glad at the sweet idea. But the people they know are not half as bad as the people they don't know. Once let their secret be guessed—and are there any honeymooners who do not look the part?—and they are watched and criticised and gossiped about until land puts them out of their misery. If he leaves her for a minute, his love is growing cold; if she chats with an unsuspecting passenger, she is a flirt who will *never* settle down; if he sleeps happily in his steamer-chair by her side, he is tiring of her; if she yawns at the endlessness of the day, married life is beginning to pall; if his voice be raised as he talks to her (he may be advising her to try and eat something at luncheon), he is developing into the usual cut-and-dried husband; if she be too indisposed to care much how she looks, she is learning how to disenchant a husband; if he doesn't call her "tootsy," he is a cold-blooded wretch; if she looks serious and gloomy, she is learning that marriage is a failure.

One's heart bleeds for the honeymooners on board ship, and there are so many of them, all trying to look usual, and never succeeding. In a crowded town, their lot would be a happier one than it is on the ship, where people are aching for romance, and are bound to weave something of the sort around the honeymooners. They analyse the poor young bride's



"People got up and walked past them"

"trousseau," and wonder what sort of clothes she will wear when *he* has to pay for them; they are anxious to know *when* he will discover that she dyes her hair and makes up her face; he *must* have married her for her money; or she took him because he was her last chance.

The honeymooners cannot please the passengers. Sometimes, I really think that they try. Gossip runs high, and it is inexhaustible. If the honeymooners own important names, and their wedding has been chronicled in the daily papers, people rack their brains to recall the details. Poor honeymooners! The storm rages around them, and they cannot escape it. There is no shelter. If they talk to stray people, they are pestered with questions, and their remarks are reported to the other passengers. We know all that there is to know about them, and imagine the rest. Kind passengers smile affectionately at them; even the Captain is subdued with gentle deference. The Captain feels responsible for this honeymoon, and he is awfully nice and attentive. The purser and the doctor—sometimes brusque—are never brusque to the honeymooners. They are the ship's "stars," compelled to twinkle, when they would love to be obscured by some thick, protecting cloud.

Honeyymooners are treated as though they were invalids, or people with some fatal disease. Passengers could not possibly be more attentive to unfortunates irrevocably afflicted with some incurable malady than

they are to the honeymooners. The honeymooners have run away from all their old friends in quest of seclusion. They find themselves confronted with new ones, who are terribly exacting, and whom they cannot flout. For while you can—and do—give your old friend a piece of your mind, you may not be candid with the new one. It is the new friend that makes the honeymooners fractious.

The important person on board ship, whose importance has not been passenger-listed, is not satisfied to remain unknown for seven whole days. He may have undertaken the trip for rest—he says he has—but is not restful to be unrecognised. It is distinctly annoying,—one's mind must be serene. He has to do all the work that the steamship company *should* have done for him. He selects a gossipy



passenger—which is not as difficult as you might think—and to this passenger he tells the story of his life. He conceals nothing, and does himself full justice. This is a duty that he owes to himself. The information thus obtained is immediately spread all over the ship, and the important person is able to settle down to mere enjoyment. He becomes deliciously reticent and modest with passengers, wonders how they know so much about him, and declares that now-a-

days it seems quite impossible to travel *incog*!

The lady who has written novels of which you have never heard is much sought after on board ship. The news of her alluring avocation reaches you quickly. You ascribe the fact that you have never heard of her novels to some oversight. Later on, she tells you that she has not been "properly advertised," and has no "head for business." The passengers gaze upon her with awe. Although everybody writes novels, tradition demands the awe that was called forth in the time when everybody didn't. The passengers actually begin to believe that they *have* read some of the books that she has never written, and they are very anxious to read her next, which she will never write. This lady is always seen taking notes for her new book. She poses on deck with a sheet of paper and a pencil. She becomes very popular, for she tells every passenger that he is going to be one of the characters in her new novel. This makes a great hit. So would her book, if every passenger appeared in it. Long before we land the lady enjoys a tremendous vogue; the stewards dance attendance upon her, and the officers say "Good-morning" when they see her.



You can generally tell important passengers by the demeanour of the officers. The doctor and the purser doff their caps and say, "Nice day," to important passengers. Importance is a good thing, say what you will, and it is easy to acquire on the ocean, where you practically begin life afresh, leaving your hideous past, your unadmiring friends, and your unappreciative relatives on shore. The absence of relatives gives a new zest to life. Who can be important with a set of abominable relatives, all with hatefully retentive memories, determined to keep a man down—where he belongs?

Then there is the playwright with a trunk full of plays that have never been produced. He becomes, for the first time in his life, poor chap, quite brilliantly important. He knows all the managers, and



calls them all by their Christian names. Every manager is just crazy to produce his plays, but they will not agree to his terms. He sets a high price upon himself, and what man who is worth his salt doesn't? At the concert he makes a speech, and is introduced by the chairman, as "The eminent playwright in our midst." Young girls on board, with stage aspirations, sit by him, and

coax him to write parts for them in his next play. On one occasion a wag buttonholed this unproduced playwright, and offered him a brilliant suggestion. The dramatist had been very loquacious on the subject of his trunk full of plays, all good in their way.

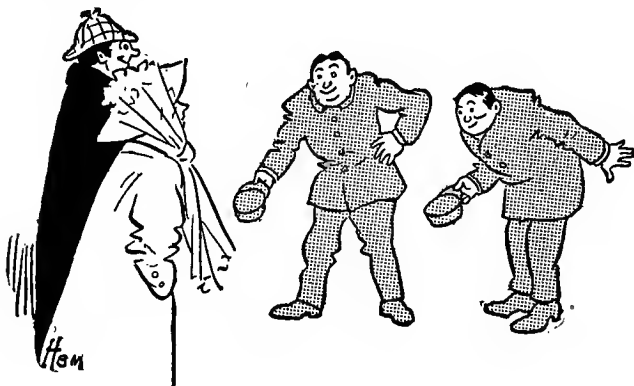
"You want to make money?" said the wag insinuatingly. "Well, I'll tell you how. Sell your plays cheap, and realise immediately. You have probably written 100,000 plays. Sell them at a dollar apiece. That will bring you in \$100,000, which is a goodly sum."

Do not imagine, however, that the most important people on board are those that chat with the passengers. That is not so. The great attraction on the steamer is the exclusive passenger who will have nothing to do with promiscuous anybodies. The exclusive passenger really cannot associate, you know, with any Tom, Dick, or Harry to whom he has not been formally introduced. He is generally one of a party, and the members of this party hold themselves aloof from the "dreadful people" around.

The exclusive passenger fails to notice you as you pass by. He is in a great hurry to get nowhere, and walks very quickly, with nothing in view. He sits with his exclusive tribe, and takes no part in any of the ship's proceedings. You hear that he is a millionaire, and are delighted. It is nice to be on the ship with millionaires, even if they snub you. Or, you learn that he is one of the "Four Hundred," and

you are charmed. The women in the party wear dingy clothes, to emphasise the fact that their temporary and undesired associates are not worth dressing for; the men are equally abstemious in the matter of apparel.

I sat opposite one of the alleged members of the "Four Hundred" at meals during one trip. She was very haughty. On my right side was a "variety" lady, covered with rouge and paste diamonds, who always ordered "six kinds of dessert" at the same time, and was very hungry. The society lady looked



at us both as though we were mere girls. Sitting so close to the "variety" lady, I suppose that the glow of her rouge suffused me; at any rate, I seemed to be with her, and I was punished accordingly. Once I said "Good-morning," but it was not heard.

The society lady used to hold forth to the companion on her right, one of her "set." Her great

topic of conversation was the way in which grandmother was accustomed to eat bananas. Grandmamma divided the skin by four cuts, and made a sort of water-lily of the banana.

The rouged "variety" lady, who would have hated to discuss her grandmother, if she had ever owned one, always looked most uncomfortable. She listened in awe. It seemed wonderful to her to hear of this great lady's grandmother. I told her that, in all probability, this particular grandmother took in washing, and possibly ate the skins of the bananas in her healthy hunger, but she did not think I was at all funny. She watched the society dame furtively, and tried to make a hit with her by putting on more rouge and paste diamonds at every meal. It was no good. The haughty lady was completely hedged in by her own exclusiveness, and would never even pass us the mustard! We certainly did not look good to her. Nor did we look anything at all. She ignored us utterly, as people who had never been able to afford the cosy luxury of a nice dead grandmother.

The aristocracy of money counts for nearly everything on board, and as it is so easy to be a millionaire for seven days, I can never understand why everybody is not aristocratic. On land, of course, it is different, but at sea you can be as rich as you say you are. Moreover, you tell so many fibs on the ocean, that one more or less can make no difference. It is no use being poor. It is silly. Nobody wants you to be poor. It is quite unnecessary. Be rich the instant you



cross the gangplank; your creditors cannot get at you; your bank statement cannot reach you; you cannot be undone for you are undunned! Spread the report that you are "simply rolling," and all the aristocratic democrats will love you, and make your trip one glad song. It is the only way in which you will ever get to know the exclusive people on board, or savour the delights of affluence. Moreover, you have all your land-life in which to be poor.

Exclusive people often have children. This may not be stylish, but they have. The exclusive child never plays with the other children.

"Mother told me not to speak to anybody," it says, with adorable candour, and it refuses all offers of candy. It is a nice little thing.

The exclusive people seem to have a most miserable time enjoying themselves. They do not talk much among themselves. They seem to be studying us all, as *we* study the steerage. They have never seen anything quite like us before. If we are jolly, they look shocked and bored. They are not interested in anything at all, except the Captain. They appear to have "secrets" with the Captain. They sit at the Captain's table, always. I have never yet discovered how exclusive people manage it, but they are always comfortably settled at the Captain's table. They appear to be known intuitively, and honoured with seats

near the king of the ship. Possibly they give their pedigree to the company when they buy their tickets. It has always been a mystery to me.

The Captain is usually a very jolly fellow, and a nice companion, and one always feels sorry that he *has* to entertain the exclusive people. It must be a trying ordeal. Sometimes he seems to wriggle out of it, but not often. They talk to him very affably, and he probably knows more about their grandmothers than the grandmothers ever knew. A Captain's life is not all beer and skittles. He may cherish a secret yearning for the rougey-cheeked variety artist, but cruel convention ties him to the lady whose grandmother's specialty was peeling bananas.

Sometimes, and not at all infrequently, the delightful odour of "scandal" is scented on board, and then we *do* enjoy ourselves. It is whispered that a certain passenger is no better than she ought to be, and then we *do* sit up and notice. The poor thing happens to have high spirits, and she declines to mope. An awful rumour is spread that she smokes in her stateroom. Somebody passed by her cabin, and detected the tell-tale cigarette in the process of being whiffed. Also (and this is whispered in dead secrecy) the steward has been seen carrying cocktails to her room. We are all on the *qui vive*. What shall we do? Shall we warn people? Shall we cut her dead? The New England spinster is for immediate action. She feels that she owes it to herself

and to Massachusetts. Of course, the refractory passenger is a foreigner. American women do not smoke or drink cocktails. They all say so, therefore it must be true. The situation is exciting.

The object of this discussion is contemptuously treated by all the women. She is consequently forced to devote all her time to the men, which must be fearfully galling. They flock round her banner, and one would actually think that she liked it. She positively *seems* to do so. She talks, and laughs, and promenades the deck, and has no unoccupied time at all which must be really dreadful. The lips of the women curl as they see her. The creature is unabashed. The New England spinster says that she wouldn't be in her boots for worlds! As the New

England spinster squeezes into a No. 7, and the merry lady is loose in a No. 3, this appears to be an unnecessary statement. It is of course merely metaphorical.

The merry lady gives the ship something to talk about, and the ship is really grateful, though it doesn't know it. There is nothing duller than a crossing without scandal, and among the many innovations that, I trust, the steamship companies will introduce, is the self-raising scandal that can be enjoyed



without any effort of the imagination. It is sometimes difficult to brew scandal among people who are usually on their best behaviour, and then passengers are at a dead loss.

Widows are awfully nice to have on board. The jolliest people on the boat are widows, and at sea they are particularly attractive. At sea, also, they are invariably "wealthy widows." You never hear of a transatlantic widow who is poor. She is always living on her ample income, and is free from all care. If you cannot weave a little scandal around the wealthy widow, then you are no good at it at all. You are quite lacking in imagination. Widowhood gives a woman a *cachet* on the ocean steamer that nothing else could possibly give her, and it is her own fault if she does not enjoy herself. As soon as the women passengers start wondering whether she has ever *really* been married—and that is but a matter of a few hours—the widow realises that the trip is going to be nice.

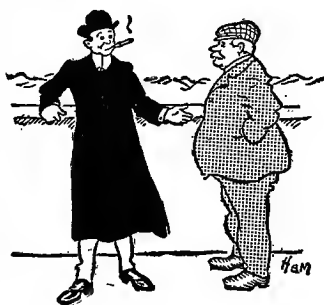
Maids and valets are very useful on board, as soon as they recover from *mal de mer*. (They are usually very ill, and for a long time.) They are useful, because they talk. They are funds of enticing information, especially when they belong to the exclusive people—and they generally do. The mistress says nothing, but the maid tells the truth! The master is silent, but the valet discloses all that it is necessary to know! On one trip there was a singularly exclusive

lady on board, and she despised us all. But before we landed we knew how much rent she paid, what her meat bills were, who catered for her well-known dinners, and whether she was good to her mother. We knew, furthermore, that she often had her clothes dyed; that when she was alone with her husband, they never partook of anything more luxurious than chops for dinner; that her "home life" was very monotonous, and that she was really bored to death.

The valet and the maid vied with each other in delivering these choice bits of information. It would be worth the while of any writer of "society news" to cross the ocean. The salt air seems to inspire the maids and valets. I have heard stories on the ship worth "scare heads" in any newspaper. The valets and maids travel first-class, and time hangs heavily on their hands. They mingle with the other passengers and are marvellously friendly. At first they conceal their calling, but when concealment is no longer possible, they make the best of it—like the wronged heroine in melodrama. Somehow or other, one can't help drawing them out—at least I can't, though I know it is most reprehensible—and when once started, they are as gods knowing good and evil. It is shameful to listen to their stories, and there is no excuse for it. Still, one does feel more cheerful when it is positively asserted by the gentle maid that the haughty dame, with the lorgnette, who has been

snubbing everybody, sells all her old clothes that won't dye, and hits her husband when she is feeling lively. It seems like the eternal justice of things. And after all, *is* it shameful? On land, we read such things, acquired in the same way. At sea, we acquire them for ourselves. This is better sport. It is the difference between buying nuts already cracked and cracking them for yourself. Nurses and paid companions are not of much use on board—I mean, of course, to the passengers. They cannot talk, because they are always with their charges. It seems a pity. They look as though they *could* talk, but their time is always taken up most inconsiderately.

What becomes of all the dear friends you meet on board? Goodness only knows. For seven days you have been so vitally interested in them, so keenly attentive to everything they had to say, that you are firmly convinced you can never quite get along without them. You have their card, and they have yours. The exchange of visiting cards on an ocean steamer is a business in itself. Yet you rarely see them again. You think of them differently as soon as you are landed. They are myths and legends of the phantom week that you spent on board—a week that seems like a dead lapse in

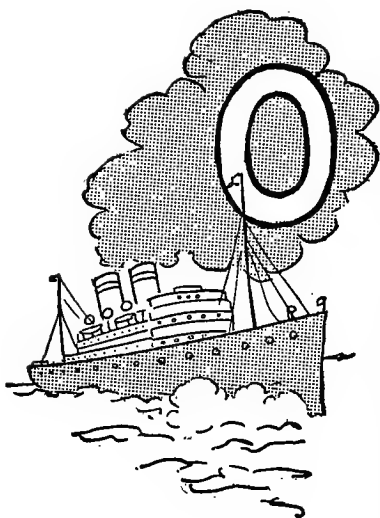


a busy life. They are ghosts, unsubstantial pictures, dream sketches—very rarely realities. They peopled a few strange days that were lopped from your activity.

You find their cards in some forgotten drawer, and you try to recall them. It is like the effort to remember a dream. If you saw them again you would think of billows, and steamer-chairs, and rugs. They fade, like photographic proofs. They become misty and indistinct. You discover an old passenger list, and wonder "who's who." Many of these people, so important for seven days, are now unrecognisable. The vast struggle to be somebody on an ocean steamer is not unlike the vaster struggle of real life on land. And it is perhaps just as bootless, just as foolish, and just as unstable. At the end of a week the greatest personage on the steamer, whom you have watched and studied incessantly, who has given zest to your trip, and food to your mind, is just hallucination!

V

MAL DE MER



N land, people are not mortally ashamed of their ailments. They do not hush up their colds, their head-aches, their tooth-aches, their dyspepsia, and their nervous prostration. On the contrary, they seem rather proud of them. They like to discuss them, to gloat over them, and to make the most of them. They

analyse every symptom, and are very much interested. You frequently meet friends who talk of nothing else but their health disturbances. You can scarcely get in a word edgeways, and it often happens that you rather envy them. You are so prosaically well, and they are so entertainingly ill! It is possible to get the history of a bad cold, from its inception to its conclusion. Even doctors cater to the

prevailing fancy for ailments. They come to see you with delightful stories of "cases" they have just left, or of patients to whom they are going.

In fact, on land, fluctuations in health are topics of conversation, and give you those pleasant thrills that vary the monotony of life.

On the Atlantic Ocean all this is changed. There is an ailment that is peculiar to the steamship, tremendously popular, and full of all sorts of possibilities and kaleidoscopic combinations. Few escape it entirely. On land, if such an ailment were possible, it would be a delicious subject for eloquent comment, and the newspapers would have columns about it. At sea, by some strange Atlantic freak, it is a theme that is tabooed. Its victims are ashamed of it. They try to conceal it. They make all sorts of excuses when discovered in its throes. Some regard it as a joke, and tease the unfortunates who succumb to it. Nobody is ever proud of it. It is never cherished as a kind of household pet—like influenza, or rheumatism, and the ever-popular malaria. Yet when you have it, you wish that you had never been born, and are perfectly convinced that you are about to die. I refer, of course, to seasickness, which I shall henceforth mention as *mal de mer*, because I think that term is more stylish, and far less objectionable.

I have met men on land who positively insisted upon being credited with a dangerous cold. They

seemed to hanker for it. They have glared at me when I told them how well they were looking. If I had hurled insults at them they could not have been more indignant. I should never have guessed that they had anything the matter with them. Yet these men, caught in the very act of *mal de mer*, will lie like troopers. They will swear that there is nothing amiss with them—more than a slight discomfort due to the fatigue of “getting away.” They will change the subject immediately, and will look as sheepish and abashed as if they had been detected in the act of committing some particularly contemptible offence.

You miss your best friend at the ship’s luncheon—your most confidential friend, who on land will make a bid for your sympathy if he suffers from a twitching eyelid. You are perfectly aware that the poor chap is laid low by *mal de mer*, for you had noticed at breakfast that he grew pale when the steward placed two thoroughly virtuous eggs before him, and that he complained bitterly about all the food. But when you meet him later, he has nothing to say. He appears



to shelter some guilty secret. He has the mien of a conscience-racked forger, and the embarrassed air of a suspected embezzler. He seems to dread being questioned.

"Feel better, old chap?" you ask. After all, you cannot be so hard-hearted as to omit the enquiry.

He fires up. "Nothing on earth the matter with me," he declares. "I don't know what you mean. I didn't come to luncheon because I had some matters to attend to in my stateroom. I never felt as fit in my life. Why—don't I look all right?"

His face is a tender shade of green, and his eyes have lost their lustre. There is a wistful, melancholy lurking around the corners of his mouth, and you notice that his hands tremble. Still, you feel obliged to tell him that he certainly does look extremely well, and he waits for this. On land, if you perjured your soul so crudely, he would be most disgusted; but at sea, he has a horror of the truth.

The jolly youth who just before the boat sails is conspicuously on deck with a large black cigar in his mouth, and merry jest for everybody on his lips, whose first meal is enormous, and whose sense of humour is uproarious, is soon upset by *mal de mer*. Poor lad! You notice that the large and terrifying black cigar is speedily eliminated from his make-up; that the easy jest has disappeared, and that the uproarious vein of humour has been replaced by a mood of tragedy. The bloom of youth has gone from his

cheeks; his brow is puckered as though in anxious thought, and his eyelids droop. When the gong sounds for the second meal, you do not see him bound from his steamer-chair in juvenile alacrity. The poor boy has a sure case of *mal de mer*.



"Come on, Tom," says his little sister, who is as right as a trivet, "the gong has sounded, and I'm as hungry as a hunter. I'm going to have some fricasseed chicken, sweet potatoes, and some rice pudding with plenty of cream on it. There is always good cream on the first day out."

You observe that he shivers as she says "cream." He has kept a bold front at the mention of chicken, and sweet potatoes, and rice pudding. But the cream hurts. It is very painful.

Now, that poor sick lad will not make a clean breast of it. He will not tell his dear little sister that he is dreadfully uncomfortable, and that the mere thought of food is a tragedy. On land, he would make a great parade of his symptoms. At sea, he will let concealment, like a worm i' the bud, prey on his sallow cheek. He says that it is awfully jolly on deck; that he is reading a most engrossing book (which is upside down in his lap); that he feels lazy, and that—well, he may join her later. It would be foolish to wait for him.

It is the sporty old boy, in the jaunty waistcoat,

and the spats on his shoes, who makes the hardest fight. He has never understood what *mal de mer* means, you have heard him say. He has crossed the Atlantic forty-four times, and feels much more at home at sea than he does on land. What he hates is a calm, monotonous voyage. There is no fun in the sea, when it is like a mill-pond. What he prefers, more than anything else, is a storm, when the boat rocks and pitches, and one has to be strapped into one's berth at night. He has crossed the Atlantic when every soul on board was terribly ill, including the stewards and stewardesses, and even the purser. Yet he was in rugged condition. He was the only passenger at table. They all congratulated him. They thought it wonderful.



This old salt gradually gets less loquacious. The sea is rather rough, and the rise and fall of the ship can be distinctly felt. There is nothing quite like the rise and fall of a ship. The rise and fall of the Roman Empire must have been very easy compared with it. When the deck-steward comes round with some delicious little smoked-salmon sandwiches, the old salt swears at him very rudely, in the presence even



"He has crossed the Atlantic forty-five times"

of ladies. He was napping, he says, and the steward had no right to wake him up. He was not napping, but he is comatose, which is one of *the* symptoms! We talk to him, but he is most snappy. He says nothing more about longing for a storm, and is silent on the subject of the famous trip when he was the only passenger at table.

We miss him from his accustomed haunts for two whole days. There is a vacant steamer-chair on deck—which would be pathetic to any of those song-writers who revel in vacant chairs. We have almost forgotten that he was a passenger, when on the third day he reappears, as game as ever, arrayed in the jaunty waistcoat, and the spats. Does he tell us the truth, which is that he has been alarmingly ill, and has not touched food since we saw him last? Not he. Perish the thought. He has been working awfully hard in his stateroom at some accounts that he brought on board with him to straighten out. Business is business, he says. And *mal de mer* is seasickness, we *could* add, but do not. We let the pleasing fiction pass, and do not dare to ask questions. Here is a man who, at home, probably has his entire household dancing attendance on him for some imaginary ailment, strenuously refusing to admit the popular indisposition of the ship.

Once I crossed with a Christian Scientist. I am very fond of Christian Scientists because they are such optimistic souls, although some of them are

dreadful bores. This gentleman was a playwright, and I liked to believe that, as he denied disease, so he denied failure. I had seen some of his failures, and could not help thinking that they were something more than errors of mortal mind. He was very chatty, and rather anxious for my conversion, which I considered kind of him. He was always well, he said, and his wife, once an invalid, was in robust condition. He used to read me things born of the Eddy cult.

"You say a sore throat is painful," he said one day, "but that is impossible, for matter without mind is not painful. The sore throat simply manifests your belief in pain, through inflammation and swelling; and you call this belief a sore throat. Now, administer mentally to your patient a high affirmation of truth on the subject, and it will soon cure the sore throat. The fact that pain cannot exist where there is no mortal mind to feel it, is a proof that this so-called mind makes its own pain—that is, its own belief in pain."

One beautiful day we sat together on the deck. The sun was shining, and the air was warm, although the boat did pitch a bit. All the passengers were very jolly; nobody minded the refractory motion of the ship *except* the Christian Scientist. He was very silent. There was a something about the tint of his complexion that, in any ordinary mortal, might have been regarded as deathly pallor. Very often he

sighed—at least, I considered that he sighed. It was certainly what mortal mind would call sighing.

At last he arose, and said that he would go to his room for an hour or so. There was some error to be corrected, he said. There was a mortal belief to be overcome. Whenever he had mortal beliefs on land, he retired into solitude, and worked hard to counteract them. He always overcame them. So he went below, looking like a ghastly impersonation of *mal de mer*. When he returned, he was quite cheerful. He admitted that he had felt uneasy, but in his room he had talked it all over with himself, communed with himself, and reasoned himself out of his mortal belief. If there had been really rough weather, his mortal belief would certainly have been most troublesome. No other passenger had the ghost of such a belief.

People recover very rapidly from *mal de mer*, as a rule, but though you have caught them with the goods, and they know it, they are very icy in their contempt for subsequent victims. They cannot understand why people give in so readily. They have quite forgotten their own prostration, or assign it to other causes. They had been



tired out; the strain of prolonged work had weakened them; they were just nervous wrecks, and it was the sudden change that laid them low. They are also rather amused at later unfortunates. How people can feel ill when the weather is so gorgeous and the boat so steady, they cannot comprehend. People must *want* to feel ill. And so on. They walk proudly around, emphasising their own flourishing health. The men smoke pipes, in sheer deviltry, and the women disclose candies and preserved fruits to the lethargic eyes of the poor rug-swathed mummies. They will tell their friends that they never had a more delightful trip in their lives. They felt no discomfort; in fact they hated to land.

"I have made a study of *mal de mer*," said a doctor on board, one day, as we strolled around together. "You understand, of course, what it is? The rolling of the ship disturbs that feeling of the relation of the body to surrounding objects upon which our sense of security rests. The nervous system being thus subjected to a succession of shocks and surprises, fails to effect the necessary adjustments for equilibrium. Now bear that in mind. *Try* and avoid those shocks and surprises. Adjust your relationship with surrounding objects. When the boat rolls, roll with it. When it pitches, pitch with it. Humour it. Don't you understand? Don't let the boat catch you napping at all. It is really very simple."

He illustrated his remarks by appropriate action. He rolled, and he pitched, just like the boat. He was most instructive, but—he did not come down to dinner that night. It was very rough. The ship not only pitched and tossed, but it indulged in a sort of hoochy-koochy movement that raised havoc with the equilibrium. I saw the erudite student of *mal de mer* being led through the passage to his stateroom by a sympathetic steward. He was not attempting to put his theories into practice. He neither rolled with the boat, nor pitched with the boat, nor hoochy-kooched with the boat. He just leaned helplessly on the steward, who dragged him along, uttering words of hope and condolence—and perchance seeing a grateful tip in the distance.

The remedies for *mal de mer* are so numerous that it is a wonder the ailment has not been effectively routed. They are as numerous as the remedies for baldness, and just about as beneficent. The doctor who is loud in his assertion that he can overcome *mal de mer*, at the very moment when he is undone by it, is on a par with the barber who recommends you a lotion calculated to bring back the long-lost covering to any head—except his own, which shines like a billiard ball.

The only positively and absolutely reliable way to avoid *mal de mer* is—to keep off the *mer*.

A timid and somewhat cadaverous-looking youth stood by my side on the deck of a steamer that was

just about to leave New York. Everybody was saying good-bye; groups of weeping relatives surrounded each happy passenger. The crowd was thick and furious. The timid youth stood apart, and I watched him in his isolation. I saw him take from his pocket a tiny glass tube, open it, and extract a pellet which he swallowed. The action seemed to suggest the idea of suicide, and I felt it was my duty to go up to him and bid him pause, ere he took his gay young life. It did not look particularly worth taking.

He laughed when I sternly asked him what he was doing. "I'm trying a new cure," he said. "I'm a wretched sailor, and I'm not going to suffer this trip, if I can help it. This cure has been given me by a friend, who swears by it."

He showed me the tube. The directions were explicit, but very busy: "Five minutes before sailing, take a pellet," I read. "At the moment the boat

moves, take another pellet. Walk up and down for ten minutes, and take a third pellet. At intervals of seven minutes, continue taking pellets throughout the first day. Immediately before and after meals, take two pellets."

"You will never be



able to do all that," I suggested. "Why, it is slavery. You will wear yourself out with so much work."

"I am going to follow this prescription closely," he declared, looking at his watch and throwing a pellet into his mouth, for the boat was moving. "My friend was not ill for a moment."

"Was the weather rough?"

"I forgot to ask him that," he replied, "but I seem to remember that he crossed in July."

Every time I saw that youth during the first day, he was taking a pellet—standing on deck with his watch in his hand, and waiting for the minutes to pass. He seemed impatient for the pellet-moment to arrive and then when it had arrived, equally impatient for the next. He told me that he had no time to arrange things in his stateroom, and had not even looked to see where it was. If he went downstairs, he would miss a pellet, and he might as well give the thing a fair trial. When evening came he looked tired and worn out. As I passed him, he held up the pellet-bottle, and smiled, to show me how nicely he was getting on. He had certainly made headway, as there did not seem to be more than fifty pellets left. By midnight, if he worked hard, and sat up, he would probably have exhausted the supply.

When I went below for the night, I said, "Sleep well," to the poor boy. He complained that he had

a dreadful headache and a strange sensation of indigestion—a feeling of tightness, he called it. But he intended to remain on deck for another hour, just to continue with the pellets.

“One is due now,” he said, breaking away from me eagerly. “Excuse me.”

Next day, I missed him, and feeling interested in the solitary lad, I went to his room to see how he was. He was quite ill. He had passed a sleepless night. His temperature had been high, and he had tossed miserably from side to side. The ship’s doctor told him that it was delayed *mal de mer*, which is very unpleasant—and also very unnecessary.

He recovered. He was as seasick as a human being could be, after which his equilibrium was restored. The other prostrated passengers were ahead



of him, however. He was the last on the ship to recover.

"I shall certainly write to my friend," he said, "and ask him what sort of weather it was when he took those brutal pellets; also—whether he took them!"

There is another excellent remedy for *mal de mer*. You take it every day for a week before sailing. By the time you go on board, you have broken out into a heavy eruption. You look as though you were bringing a very fine case of measles to the ship. The passengers regard you with suspicious eyes, and you discover very soon that you are avoided. The first person to whom you speak runs away. You hear mothers warning their children "not to talk to that man with the awful face," and the entire ship seems to be whispering about you. They gaze upon you as though you were a pariah, and the more explanations you make, the more sinister are the looks you encounter. The passengers seem to be deciding upon a plan of action. They stand in groups on the deck, talking in low tones, and watching you as you prowls in wretched solitude.

You look normal after the first day, but *feel* fearfully abnormal. The beauty about this "cure" is that it brings on *mal de mer* even in the very finest weather—which is really wonderful. Furthermore, the eruption returns occasionally, just to put you at your ease, and I have known it endure for weeks

after landing. In fact, it is a good deal for the money. Ladies who take this cure wear heavy veils when they are on deck, to hide their disfigurement. But it is not often necessary for them to wear veils, for they are generally in bed, begging the stewardess to throw them overboard and put an end to their miseries. Stewards and stewardesses, I may add, although enjoined by the company to do all they can for passengers, are never allowed to throw them overboard when, in the agonies of *mal de mer*, they plead for this luxury. And it *does* seem a luxury. One yearns for it.

"The reason you are always ill, my dear madame," I heard a doctor say to a lady, who was imploring him to suggest to her some deterrent, "is that you do not understand the art of breathing correctly. Now if you go to your stateroom, disrobe, and watch yourself, in perfect inactivity in front of a mirror, you should note, if you breathe correctly, that: the anterior and lateral walls of the chest move rhythmically up and down, while air passes into and out of the nostrils (and mouth also, if this be open) in correspondence with the movement——"

"Had I better keep my mouth open?" she asked anxiously.

"Please listen," he continued, enjoying himself. "With every uprising of the chest walls, the membranous intercostal portions sink slightly, as if sucked in, while, at the same time, the flexible walls of the

abdomen bulge as if protruded by some internal force. Do I make myself clear?"

The poor thing—one of those women who always think in words of one syllable—looked a trifle embarrassed, but she said she understood *perfectly*, and had never heard breathing so simply and eloquently explained.

"Later on," he resumed, "take a little hand-mirror, and look at the back of your throat, during respiration, and you *should* notice that the glottis is wide open during *inspiration* and that it becomes narrower by the approximation of the vocal chords during *expiration*. This alteration is produced by the action of the laryngeal muscles."

"I see," she said, "thank you so much."

She was very ill indeed. In fact she was one of the miserable creatures who never appeared on deck until the day before landing. I told her that I had listened to the medical exhortation on correct breathing that the friendly physician had uttered.

"Perhaps it was good," she said sadly, "but I never got a chance to try it. I was taken ill, while I was getting the mirror ready, and fussing around, instead of taking things easily. If I had stayed on deck, I might have had a better chance, but there I was in that stuffy stateroom, moving mirrors around, trying to get the right light, and—illness overcame me, and I stayed ill. Never again. I shall go on breathing, as I have been brought up to breathe. I

shall breathe at sea just the same as on land. I believe that doctor liked to hear himself talk."

When you have been so ill that you have longed to be cast into the Atlantic Ocean, and have threatened to report your steward for disobedience, because he refused to fling you into the billows, it is disgusting to be told that the boat never rocked once all the way over, and that its steadiness was so remarkable that the world's engineers were interested. You would never lie on such a subject, and yet—if the ship did not pitch and toss, you did; and if the ship did not pitch and toss you, then you must have dreamed it.

The boat was so steady on one trip, during which several passengers had been utterly overwhelmed, that, according to statements published in the papers, a glass of water, full to the brim, had been placed on the deck, and left there for experimental purposes. None of the water was spilled. This was looked upon as an extraordinary feat. Some of the papers wrote editorials about it, and declared that this ship must be steadier than many of the sky-scrapers in New York that vibrate so unpleasantly. I met one of the feminine passengers the next day, and she was very indignant.

"Did you read what they said in the papers about placing a glass of water on deck?" she asked vehemently. "It's easy to make foolish statements like that. Did you see that glass of water? No. Did I? No. Did any of my friends? No. We were all too

ill to see it, even if it had been there. They might have placed a glass of whiskey on deck, and nobody would have had the energy to drink it. It's dreadful to think that seamen can lie so."

It is also exasperating to meet a fellow-sufferer—the fellow who sat beside you on the deck, and was just a trifle worse than you were—and to discover that he has quite forgotten his illness, while you are so candid about yours.

"Well, old chap," you say, affectionately, "I guess that dry land is good enough for us. You look better than you did last Wednesday. I shall never forget the look of sea-green anguish on your face. We *were* a couple of unfortunates."

He looks at you as though you were speaking an unknown language. He has no idea what you mean. He can recall no such incident as that which you mention, and he is so plausible about it that you begin to think that you must have been dreaming. And yet, you are willing to swear that you were a miserable wretch last Wednesday.

"*I* certainly felt very groggy," you say stammeringly. "And—and—I thought you did."

"Not at all," he asserts mendaciously. "I may have had a headache. I remember now that I had been smoking too much—too many cigars. Otherwise, I have never felt better in my life. It was a delightful voyage, and I am sorry it is over. The sea was like a mill-pond—almost *too* calm."

He pursues his way with alacrity, and you wonder

why remembrance is so bitter. You seem to see a vision of him on that hideous Wednesday when he "slanged" the deck-steward for suggesting food; when he sighed every time the boat lurched; when he swore that nothing would ever induce him to cross again, and when he sank into comatose slumber until darkness settled on the face of the waters. With laughter, the world is with you; with *mal de mer*, you are alone. It is very provoking. People on board ship are most ungrateful. You do all in your power to ameliorate their symptoms, and they tell you that they never had any. What's the use?

It is said, I do not know how truly, that very old people never suffer from *mal de mer*. I happened to mention this to several people who had enjoyed splendid health during the trip. They did not seem at all pleased, and seemed to think it personal. The New England spinster, I was informed, took it much to heart, and declared that she had suffered a great deal, in her stateroom. After that, I never alluded to the subject again. I thought that passengers would be glad to know that it was possible to out-grow such a distinctly disagreeable ailment. When I first heard that very old people are never ill at sea, it quite cheered me up. It gave me something to live for, to anticipate pleasantly. In fact, it contributed charm to old age. But evidently the statement was displeasing. The reason I made it was that a little girl told me that her grandmother was crazy to go to Europe, but was afraid of the ocean.

"Very old people are never ill," I said, and when she was surprised and incredulous, I mentioned it to the others, and the New England spinster happened to be among them. This seems a trifle, but as my remark made me so many enemies, it is not a trifle to me.

Never waste any sympathy on people afflicted with *mal de mer*. This is a difficult rule to follow, because if you have ever suffered yourself you long to be helpful. When you go up on deck after breakfast, feeling pleased with the world in general, do not approach the listless fellow lying outstretched on his steamer-chair, and tell him that a soft-boiled egg would do him a power of good.

Do not try to make conversation with the once-animated widow, whom you see swathed in rugs, by telling her that the bacon at breakfast was excellent, and suggesting that she try it.

Never talk oatmeal-and-cream to the recumbent chap who has just been dragged from his stateroom to get a little fresh air on deck. You have eaten it, and it has made you very good-humoured, but he will undoubtedly resent any allusion to oatmeal-and-cream.

Never wake up comatose deck mummies to offer them a cigar, however generous you may be, and however keen you may know that their appetite for tobacco usually is. They will look upon you as though you were a leper.

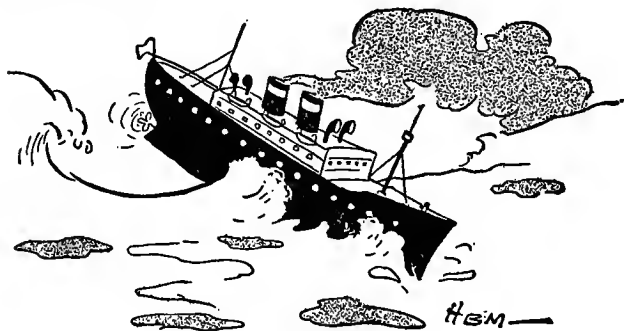
Pretty girls love candies, but do not offer your box of the very richest to the maiden who sits with her eyes closed and her hands listlessly folded in front of her. She is oppressed, but it is not by any need of candy.

Do not discuss restaurants, and epicures, and "favourite dishes" until you have been several days at sea, and even then look well before you leap.

If the eggs at breakfast have been a trifle world-weary, or the fish has been affable in spots only, do not mention this even to your best friend. Let the secret die with you. On board ship, friendship is a brittle commodity.

Do not brag constantly that you have never missed a meal, to the sad-faced individual, who has never missed—missing them all.

And if you must have a Welsh-rarebit before retiring at night, whisper your desire into the ear of the steward. Do not advertise it among the prostrate forms on deck.



VI

CHILDREN ON BOARD



PRETTY little girls on the ocean liner are nearly always eleven years old. At first, you are completely bewildered by what seems to be the oddest sort of coincidence. You have been chatting very vivaciously with one of those cunning young American lassies who are such good company during the trip, and you ask her how old she is. She looks at least fifteen, and talks at least thirty-one, but she says, with a pellucidly truthful look into the middle of your eye, "I'm just eleven."

You have been laughing at the varied European experiences of another much-travelled little girl, who has been everywhere, and "done" everything, who "bosses" her mommer and popper, and treats you with a sort of condescending superiority. She seems much older than many of the old people on deck, but she tells you, in emphatic tones, that she is eleven years old. You suggest that she is very big for her age, and the remark appears to annoy her. You no-

tice, subsequently, that she *seems* to be telling her father and mother, who look at you somewhat indigantly from their steamer-chairs.

You meet a third, very tall and very lanky. She wears short dresses which look inappropriate, and her hair floats in the breeze rather conspicuously. She suggests a problem. Is she really a little girl, or a big girl disguised? You ask her, and she replies shortly, "I was eleven last birthday."

You begin to believe that you are associating with the future mothers of a race of giants. Never in all your life have you seen such tremendous eleven-year-olds. I remember listening to a conversation between one of these overgrown girls and a tiny mite of nine years old. It was very instructive.

"How old are you?" piped the tiny mite of nine.

"Eleven," promptly responded the big girl.

"You're only two years older than I am?" queried the tot incredulously. "Why, I heard mommer say that you must be at least sixteen——"

"You're a very rude little girl," said the big girl irritably, "and you talk too much."

"What time do you go to bed?" persisted the tot, the retiring hour being the great bond of sympathy between children of all ages.

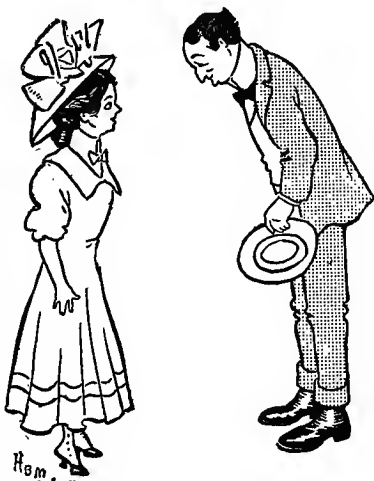
"Any time," replied the big girl. "Generally ten o'clock."

"I go to bed at seven," murmured the tot, "and mommer says when I'm eleven, I shall go to bed at

eight. I suppose I shan't be as big as you are. It must be ripping to be tall and old-looking like you."

You long for a key to this apparent mystery, for the problem grows knottier. You pick up a book, in which you read the inscription: "To dear Cora, from mother, on her fourteenth birthday." Later on, dear Cora promptly tells you that she is eleven years old, and you suppose that mother must have given her a book that she had intended to present three years later. Dear Cora certainly looks fourteen, and absolutely refuses to "play" with the children who look eleven. She regards them as babies, after the manner of big little girls.

All this is very puzzling, of course, unless you happen to have children of your own. Then you *know*; there is no mystery at all; it is as plain as a pikestaff. There is an explanatory legend on every steamship company's prospectus: "Children between one and eleven pay half fare." Under such circumstances, you can quite understand how annoying it is for parents to discover that





their children have been born two or three years too late. It is unpardonable, and it is unbearable. But as no certificates of birth are ever asked for, there is a remedy. The truth is a very good thing in its right place, but half a fare saved—well, that is not such a very bad thing in its right place, which is on the ocean steamer.

Parents have a great deal of trouble in this matter, but then, they have trouble in so many others, that they are used to it. Nice little girls of twelve, and thirteen, and fourteen hate to under-age themselves. Their ambition is to be as grown-up as possible. Of course. It is not until a girl has ceased to be a girl that she is interested in subtraction. Therefore, many children cannot and will not understand why they must be so young on the ocean. They dislike it immensely, especially when they have to dig out some forgotten young clothes from the limbo of the past.

The annoying thing that parents have to face is the fact that perfect strangers feel completely justified in asking the dear children how old they are. This should never be permitted. A young girl on board ship is as old as she doesn't look, and doesn't feel. This prying into statistics, all very well on land, is most impertinent at sea. Men and women who are

fathers and mothers never pry. They are so busy reducing their own children to the half fare that they are sympathetic and intuitively sagacious. It is the young unmarried people who are so inquisitive and so embarrassing. Experience teaches. Nowadays, I never ask a child her age on the steamer, for I know that she is eleven. If she is not, her parents are reckless folks who are anxious to throw their money away.



Yet this complication is often lovely. Frequently one crosses year after year with the same people. Little Miss Cute who was eleven last year, has not aged at all. You are a year older, and you look it. But she is still eleven, although she doesn't look it. She will be eleven next year, too. She will be eleven until her younger brother, who is thirteen, and too big to be half-price, reveals the fatal truth in self-defence. Little Miss Cute sometimes stays in Europe for a whole year, and returns—still eleven. Some people think that foreign travel keeps one young. It certainly seems to do so in this case.

Occasionally these age-restrained youngsters rebel; frequently they forget. The eleven-year-old who is fourteen is anxious to take part in the "sports" that are sometimes organised on the ship. He enters

the race for boys over twelve. The ocean-fact that he is just eleven has slipped from his memory, poor little chap! Mommer hauls him back to his enforced ultra juvenility.

"You naughty boy!" I heard her say to him on one of these festive occasions. "You know you are eleven. Didn't I tell you that I wouldn't take you to Europe unless you were eleven? Go at once and tell the officer that you won't be twelve for a year." (She might have made it three years, for he was a small lad.)

The poor child wept. "I don't want to go in for a baby's race," he protested. "It isn't fair to me, and it isn't fair to the others. Who cares how old I am anyway?"

"I care, Reginald," said mother, "and your father cares. Now be a good boy. We shall land the day after to-morrow, and you can be sixteen if you like."

The child who is eleven years old just for the trip conflicts with the child who has a certificated right to that age. How the poor kid does hate to be eleven! He would far sooner have remained in New York to be joyously thirteen, and to "play" with his elders. His pleasure is marred. He becomes surly. Life to him is retrogression, not progression. He goes to the children's table—on the English liner—with the nurses and maids, who decline to believe that he is only eleven, and cross-examine him, and try to trip him—which is easy enough, for his heart is not in his

fib. He is tucked up in his bunk at an ungodly hour, for the sake of appearances, and he feels the gross indignity of the thing. The child who is really eleven insists upon making a pal of him, and sees no reason for his haughtiness.

The half-price child rarely enjoys his trip across, and when he has landed there is the dread presentiment always with him that, when he returns, he will be obliged to be eleven again. Yet parents feel no qualms when they buy their tickets. To say diffi-



dently that a child is eleven, is easy, but to keep him eleven for a week, when he is longing for his majority, is not so simple.

Sometimes, the parents of the various children conflict. Mommer is very proud of her boy, who is so well-grown, splendidly developed, and just eleven! She points to him with pride; she brags about him; she tells his age to everybody, though she *may* be less candid next year.

"Yes, he is a fine boy," says somebody. "But look at that great big chap over there. He's a wonder. Why, he is positively growing a moustache. He is only eleven."

"If that boy's eleven, then I'm sixteen," declares the baffled mother, indignantly. "The way in which people lie about their children's age is disgusting. There is no excuse for it, and I cannot for the life of

me understand *how* they do it."

She will understand next year, and perhaps she, too, will—er—lie.

The infant is free, I think, on some of the lines. On others, it costs five dollars—provided there is only *one* in a family,



The infant should be charged at double the maximum rate, and there should be *none* in any family that undertakes the transatlantic trip. If the infant enjoys the ocean crossing it does so in its own peculiar way. It is usually very merry at midnight, when the adult passengers have ceased to frivel, and it generally prattles delightfully at the matutinal hour of five o'clock. Its parents, who are cooped up with it in a stateroom, revel in the vivacious moods of their infant, even if, to the other passengers, those moods seem strangely out of place. They tell everybody that it is "*such* a good child," and that it never cries. When, however, you are particularly eager to forget the bounding billows, in happy oblivion, good infants appear to you to be just as prohibitive as bad ones. Baby is awfully cute in the next stateroom, and it is *not* crying; yet you would feel relieved if it were not laughing. Dear little thing! Of course you love babies, and their sunny ways, but when the ship is very silent, and you are quite drowsy, and your bunk is most comfortable, and you are longing to indulge in the pleasant but hackneyed pastime of being "rocked in the cradle of the deep," the sunny ways of the pet, who is separated from you by a few boards, lack all warmth.

Whenever you are just "dropping off," and are congratulating yourself that baby has got ahead of you, the clear manly voice of the masculine parent sings out, "Ups! Ups! Popper's boy!" This hap-

pened to me last year. I tried to Christian-Science myself into sublime disregard of such petty stings—errors of mortal mind—but the scheme utterly failed to work. The ocean was quite noisy; the sound of the machinery was loud in my ears, but above it all I heard: “Upsi! Upsi! Popper’s boy!”

I could almost see that proud young father, tossing up “popper’s boy,” and drinking in the delightful cooing laughter of the infant. What annoyed me more than anything was that mommer was not in the least disturbed by “Upsi! Upsi! Popper’s boy!” and this seemed to me like rank injustice. *I* should have slept, while *she* enjoyed the gambols of her child. If I had particularly hankered for baby talk in the privacy of the stateroom, I could have found some infant to accompany me across the

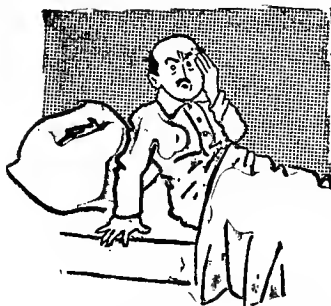
ocean, and could have afforded the five dollars, which is, of course, very little.

My room-mates also slept soundly, and stoutly declined to interrupt their slumbers by listening to “Upsi! Upsi! Popper’s boy.” I yearned to wake them up, and make fellow-



sufferers of them. It is always so dreadful to be alone. Upon my room-mates it must have acted as a lullaby, and I envied them. When I asked one of them in the morning if he had really slept through the joy-song in the next cabin, he testily replied that it did not bother him in the least, for he was very fond of children. The insinuation in his remark seemed to be that I was not! It was not worth arguing about. One can be very fond of children, and yet prefer them at the other end of the ship.

On one liner every man on board seemed to trundle a baby-carriage about the deck. There are folding baby-carriages that can be put into steamer-trunks—a charming arrangement. There were so many of these on board, that you felt positively immoral without one. It seemed like a wicked waste of time to walk up and down the deck without a baby-carriage. In fact, on this ship, I thought that the company provided them, and could scarcely refrain from applying to the purser for a nice, easy-going baby-carriage, with a fractious infant in it. Parents looked quite scornfully at non-parents. They taunted them, and appeared to wonder how they could possibly imagine that they were enjoying an ocean trip without a baby. They looked upon you as useless lumber, as you lay idle in your steamer-chair, watching them trundling past. It was just like a kindergarten. The infants slept in the keen sea air, and did themselves a great deal of good.



The parents seemed anxious for them to sleep as much as they could in the day-time, so that they could prattle prettily during the night. Babies on a liner always sleep all day, and always do *not* sleep all

night. If you can regulate your own slumbers to fit in with this pious scheme, you will be quite undisturbed. It is very healthy for a baby to sleep in the open air, instead of in a stuffy state-room; it would also be healthy for you, but you cannot break yourself of the foolish habit of sleeping, or of trying to sleep, at night.

Why do babies cross the ocean? Do not tell me that it is to get to the other side, because either side would suit them equally well. They are dragged across, poor little dears, because mommer and popper cannot leave them at home. They are taken to Italy and Switzerland, and initiated into all the agonies of foreign travel, simply because mommer and popper selfishly like foreign travel. Unlike Mr. Grossmith, in his song, parents refuse to "leave the baby on the shore."

"I took a nurse with me one year," a fond mother confided in me, "but I shall never do it again. Nurse suffered from *mal de mer* from the very in-

stant we sailed until we landed. I had to take care of her. I waited on her hand and foot, and took charge of baby as well. I have discovered that nurses are very sensitive. No matter how calm the weather may be, they are always ill. They seem to think that it is their privilege to be ill; that to be well would be ridiculous, and even Quixotic on their part. It was the busiest voyage I have ever had. I should like to have been ill myself, for a day or two, but I simply hadn't time. No more nurses for me."

Baby on the ocean is always well. This sounds refreshing, but sometimes baby's health is distinctly in the way, and extremely awkward. I have seen the mother laid low, the aunt prostrated, the little sister comatose in her bunk, yet baby insisted upon being petted, and played with, and looked after. Baby hated to stay in the stateroom with the invalids. Baby was gay and obstreperous, and inclined to patronise the turbulent ocean. It is a morbid mother who repines at the good health of her offspring, but in this particular family the poor sea-racked parent declared that if baby had just felt a touch of the discomfort that raged on the ship, it would have made the child more sympathetic. As it was, it refused to be discomfited. It was hungry. The sight of food made the mother wish that she was dead, but she had to dally with milk, and arrange dainty repasts for the voracious infant. You can take your dog across for ten dollars, and the ship's butcher will take care of

him for you, in consideration of a tip. But you cannot leave the baby with the ship's butcher. You can take a bird over for four dollars provided that you cage it. But you cannot cage the baby, and that is why the dear little cherub seems at times to intrude.

You must remember that no baby is crazy to go to Europe. The average infant is quite satisfied to stay anywhere, and does not clamour for foreign travel. It goes because it is compelled to go, and doesn't know what is to happen to it. Therefore every ocean-going mother owes something to the poor baby, who has been dragged from its nursery to the steamship, and will be dragged from the steamship to some uncomfortable hotel. If one were only able to crate a baby, as one crates a bicycle, the matter would be very simple. Bicycles must be "properly crated," and are taken at the "owners' risk." Why has a bicycle privileges that are denied the baby?

On the old-fashioned lines, particularly the conservative English ones, children take their meals at a separate table. On the German steamers that cater to free Americans, and know what the Americans like, such a restriction is not practised. Little Sadie sits at dinner with mommer and popper, studies the elongated *menu*, and goes through it all religiously. English passengers are aghast at this. They think it *dreadful*. The English child is kept under a bushel until maturity sets in. It is brought up in the delightful notion that the good things enjoyed by its parents belong to later life only. It is satisfied with inferior

food conservatively believed to be more nourishing. It grows up greedy, and always hungry, clamouring for the delicacies that were denied it in its early days. The American child, permitted to partake of everything, and not taught to regard any particular viand



as forbidden fruit, acquires no abnormal appetite, and is very sensible. You see the two brands of child on the ship, and the difference between them is impressive.

The ocean child is very precocious. The child of the exclusive passenger is most amusing. Although it is usually requested not to talk to promiscuous

people—it talks. It tells you all about popper's automobiles, and how much they cost; it knows the price of mommer's dresses, and it can discuss foreign hotels very plausibly.

The child with a nurse looks contemptuously at the child without one. It has "caste" written all over it. It is a haughty little kid, taking its cue from mommer and popper, who educated it in all the subtleties of democratic aristocracy. And these subtleties are so numerous, that you are particularly delighted at the interesting study. Sometimes the exclusive child is paraded up and down the deck by a French maid, and talks villainous French to this long-suffering type. So does mommer. You can hear mommer's Ollendorfian quips above the swish of the ocean, but the replies of the French maid are inaudible. The little girl, you are told, speaks better French than English. You can quite believe it. No self-respecting democratic aristocracy considers its native tongue very important. French is *the* language for the nice child. Yet in France, the most inferior people speak French—people whom you would refuse to ask to your house speak absolutely perfect French!

The Captain loves children. Every Captain loves children, and says so. They pester the life out of him, and are fearfully familiar, but he smiles at their behaviour—when mommer is looking. On a fine morning, the Captain walks round the deck, chucks

the children under the chin, and tells them stories of his own little boys and girls. The last Captain I crossed with had thirteen, and was able to remember all their names. The mothers on board thought it was perfectly sweet of him having so many children. He was a mother's man, and was very popular. Though he had so many little girls of his own, he had no objection at all to bigger girls—those of eighteen or nineteen years old. He was awfully nice to them, probably remembering that they had once been tots. That is a great test. Every man who adores the tiny prattling girl, should be kind to the maiden of blushing sixteen, just because she was once a tot! It is not nice to be harsh to a pretty girl just because she is no longer a tot. She cannot help it.

The doctor on board usually prefers little tots of twenty or so, and makes himself very attractive to them. He loves the tiny children, however, especially those with grown-up sisters, and he makes great



pets of them, as a sort of prelude to their grown-up sisters.

Children on board are very useful in that way. You see a very charming young woman, who has no husband to speak of, and who drags around a husky boy all the time. On land, you would think the husky boy an odious cub, with his bad manners, his "tough" accent, and his dirty hands. At sea, you take to him instinctively. You insist upon walking with him on deck, and you play games with him, and let him win. Later on, his pretty mother thanks you and, in order to be thanked comfortably, you sit in the unoccupied steamer-chair by her side. And there you are! A pleasant friendship is established, which might have been very difficult without the husky boy.

Many young men, who are dying to talk to a pretty girl, pave the way with a few trivial candies offered to her little sister. They are attracted irresistibly to the tot who subsequently leads them in the direction of the pretty girl. You often hear this sort of thing:

"Sylvia, come and sit down. You are worrying that gentleman. You mustn't do it."

"She isn't worrying me at all," says that gentleman, doffing his hat as he realises that everything comes to him who waits. "I am awfully fond of children."

The pretty girl smiles adorably. "It is ex-

tremely good of you," she says. "I've watched you playing with Sylvia, and she seems to have been leading you a life. You look tired. Sylvia, run away and play."

"I guess I *was* a bit tired," he says, dropping into a seat by the pretty girl. "What a charming child she is—so friendly and so amusing."

Sylvia does not come back, and he does not go after her, and the pretty girl wonders where little Sylvia is, but does not worry. After that he plays no more with little Sylvia. He is always tired, in a chair by the pretty girl. And there you are again!

Young men should never travel without candies. A box or two of the very best is worth its weight in gold. It is an open sesame to many delightful associations. A young man can never do wrong by offering a child some candies, and children never travel alone. They nearly all have sisters—affectionate girls who love to see the children nicely treated. Candies can often be bought on the ship, but it is better to purchase them on land, as part of one's travelling *trousseau*.

Sometimes, of course, love's labour seems to have been lost. On one trip there was a very pretty young matron, who was travelling with her little boy—and a very cute little boy he was. It was on a German boat, and the officers did not speak very good English. The purser liked the pretty matron very much, and made friends immediately

with the boy. He was soon introduced to the young matron, and seemed very happy.

"I only wish I spoke English properly," I heard him say to her.

"I'll teach you, if you like," she declared promptly.

The joy on that man's face was appalling! Here was his chance to learn English, and never have I seen a fellow manifest such a craving for knowledge. That night I saw the pretty matron and the purser on deck. She was teaching him English, but he looked crestfallen, miserable, and even despondent. He was a very bad pupil, and his verbs were simply disgusting. She was very patiently, very encouragingly, doing her best to give him at least a superficial knowledge of our beautiful language—the language of Shakespeare!—and on her lap sat the cute little boy! The cute little boy was very wide-awake, and lively—also extremely chatty. Now why did the purser look so wretched? He was very fond of the cute little boy. Yet his English did not improve at all. He was still far from fluent when we landed. Perhaps matrons with cute little boys, worn on their laps, are not the best teachers in the world.

The annoying thing about children on board is that they never seem to go to bed. Their reign is endless. Much as you love them, and revel in their ingenuous prattle, you feel that they should go to

bed after dark. It is good for their immature intellect. But it is after dark that they are at their liveliest. You are enjoying a heart-to-heart talk with a very pleasing girl in a sombre corner of the deck that you have had in your mind's eye all day. You are talking about the moonlit sea, and the poetry of the occasion surges in your breast. It is precisely this sombre corner of the deck that the children select for their very unnecessary game of hide-and-seek. Perhaps you have just remarked that "the moon is the sweet regent of the sky," which always sounds well, and is a useful quotation to have around the house, when there is a hideous shout of "Cuckoo! I'm ready!" behind your chair, and out bounces an irrepressible. It is an awful shock, and your nerves are horribly jangled.

"It is disgusting, keeping children up so late," you declare peevishly, losing all interest in "the sweet regent of the sky." But you discover that it is *her* brother who has called "Cuckoo!" and you are obliged to smile indulgently, and assert that after all, the dear little things must amuse themselves. You re-



peat that you love children, but at that moment you loathe them.

Children make and mar flirtations. You think that you have done your duty when you have declared all day that you love children. At night you feel the need of a rest. At night you are distinctly of the opinion that you are not called upon to love children so fervently. But the sea-child is very obstreperous. Its high spirits are absolutely alarming. You want the quiet, dark ship for poetic sentiment; the sea-child wants it for noisy games. And the sea-child gets it. It breaks in upon your carefully arranged *tête-à-tête*, and there is no redress. While candies work well all day, they decline to carry their labours into the night. Children hate to go to bed; no amount of candy will act as an inducement. Little Johnnie laughs in your face when you promise him a box of candy to-morrow, if he will go to bed like a good boy. He may even tell you to "go chase yourself," for he is a bright little chap.

Exciting bridge games in the smokeroom are broken up by dear little children. They dash in, and drag their father away, under the pretence that mother wants him, just as you have doubled a "no trumper," and are feverish and petulant to play it. This is an unkind cut. It often happens. Sometimes it looks as though children were trained to

romp in and break up a nice game at a critical moment. Then they lean over you, while you are playing, and describe the cards you hold to your opponent. Your opponent says that children are awfully cute. You say nothing, afraid that the remark uppermost on your lips would be unfit for publication. Later on—when you have lost the rubber—you cannot help asserting that a smoke-room is no place for a child, which is a very temperate remark, under the circumstances.

This sort of remark never makes a hit with the parent, probably because its truth is so apparent. The parent glares at you, and then the child begins to cry, and you feel a wretch, and give the naughty little thing a penny, and the naughty little thing ceases crying immediately. After that you experience no pressing need for any more bridge, and sit in a corner playing solitaire.

The ship's children are indeed irrepressible. Only an idiot would try to repress them, and he would try only once. Parents want the little things to have a thoroughly good time, and they can achieve that only by making everybody else restive. If you object, you are "grouchy" and the children are warned to "keep away from that disagreeable man"—which you wouldn't mind if they *did* keep away. They play behind the life-boats, where the ship's rail ceases to exist, and your heart is in your

mouth at the thought of possible disaster. But if you mention danger to the parents, you are snubbed. They are evidently willing to take chances.

Then your child "won't play" with some other child, and you fondly agree that the other child isn't worth playing with; and the parents of the other child come up, and indignantly complain that your child is badly behaved, and ask that it be punished. And the other children whisper about it, and the other parents take sides. The ship seems alarmingly small—much too small. You cannot take your child home; the other parents cannot take their children home. All the poor things are floating away from home. The quarrel is soon settled—in order to make room for another. Those who have no children are always unnecessarily interested, and invariably sorry for the child that has caused the trouble.

Candy and chloroform are two commodities that come in handy for an adjustment of the child question on board—the candy for the child, and the chloroform for yourself.



VII

FLIRTATIONS

NOTHING that the Flirt of either sex has ever imagined in wildest dream can beat the ocean steamship for "cosy corner" surprises and nook-y subtlety. For seven days the Flirt of either sex has an imposing variety of splendidly furtive retreats. There is no place on earth—and this isn't on earth—

where susceptible lads and impressionable lassies can so admirably learn *not* to know each other as in mid-Atlantic, on the big raft that is called a ship. It is there that the *genus* Flirt attains its supreme fruition, and that hearts are trumps, all the way over.

There was a time when the ballroom was looked

upon as the great parade-ground of the Flirt, and the mazy dance was regarded as the one affectionate pastime for palpitant hearts. That time has long since passed; modern improvements have killed it dead. The ballroom, with its eligible men, all labelled, and its marriageable girls, with anxious mommers waiting for them by the wall, was good enough in its way. Everything is good enough in its way until something better happens. This is a great age: only wait, and something better is sure to happen.

The curious thing about the ocean steamship flirtation is that nobody is labelled. That is the great charm of the pursuit—for the men! And after all, why should men invariably be disconcerted by the label on the jar? In a ballroom, the sweet young *ingènue* knows the men who are married, and carefully avoids them. She reasons, sanely enough, that they have been appropriated; that they are not free; that it would be waste of time to dance with another woman's husband; in fact, that it would be foolish. In the ballroom, the "object matrimony" legend is inevitably instilled into the girl-heart by her dowager mommer, who sits clucking by the wall like an affectionate hen.

This has always been rather rough on the men. The ethics of a sound, a genuine, and a delicious flirtation do not insist upon an unhappy ending—

I mean, of course, a happy ending. The utter and deliberate Flirt is untrammelled by any necessity to "support" his pretty little accomplice for life. He is a butterfly, busily winging his way from one fair flower to the other. And on the transatlantic steamship he can "butterfly" for all he is worth without shocking the conventions.

It is the "married man" who, on earth, finds that iron-bound conventions nip him in the bud. It is the "married man" precisely who at sea discovers that the ship is his, with all that is delightful therein. His label is discarded the very instant he crosses the gang-plank. He is young, and free, and ardent, and charming again. Nobody can possibly tell that he is married. A woman generally *looks* married. In some indescribable way, it is nearly always possible to detect a girl who is wedded. But a man must be ostentatiously labelled before the glad tidings can prevail. Matrimony sets no stamp on the man. It used to be that the "married man" was known by his neatness, his array of buttons all



in the right place, his sedately fresh attire. That is no longer the case. Self-respecting and emancipated wives have other fish to fry.

The "married man" on board ship very often looks like a mere laughing lad. He is bright, clean-shaven, alert, and fearfully affectionate. There is nothing in his make-up to indicate that he has a wife and children on the distant shore. Nobody knows him. He has come on board determined not to worry, and worry he won't. He has taken to the ship for rest and recreation, and he will find both! He scans the galaxy of travelling maidens with an eager eye, and makes his selection. Usually his first work is to tip the deck-steward, and tell that susceptible and highly-tippable official where to place his steamer-chair. He points to the girl he has chosen.

It is not often that the poor "married man" finds himself let loose in a "rosebud garden of girls," to prowl around at his sweet will. On land, his condition is as restricted as that of a jar of marmalade that would like to pose as strawberry jam, but can't, owing to the label, and the pure-food laws, and all that sort of thing. At sea, he can keep the story of his past to himself—and he generally does!—until it is time to say a fond farewell on the landing-stage.

In criminal law, every man is innocent until he has been proved guilty. On board ship, every fel-

low is unmarried until he has been proved married. The man who appropriates the prettiest girl on the ship, who chats with her behind the life-boats, stands with her by the rail looking into the darkening sea, and reads poetry with her in the silence of the topmost deck, may be married, and most certainly is, but it would be cruel to tell her so, would it not? The "married man" always hates to do cruel things. Why scatter the illusions of the prettiest girl on the ship?

If the prettiest girl on the ship happens to be American, which is usually the case, she can hoist any flirt by his own petard. She is not worrying a bit. She places her father in the smokeroom, and



sees that he plays bridge; she sits her mother with some awfully nice ladies who are embroidering beautiful things of the useless persuasion. They have no qualms. They are not crossing the Atlantic for the express purpose of finding a husband for their pretty girl. She may be a flirt; if she is not, she will miss lots of fun. She can cope with any persuasive and insinuating Lothario.

It is only when the prettiest girl is English that the butterfly Benedict is looked upon with serious eyes. The English girl cannot chain her father to the smokeroom, or her mother to the knitting-needles. Father and mother see that she is flirting. What is she flirting with? Is he of good family? Is he in a "position" to marry? Has he a respectable income? English parents always mean business. They are practical and unsentimental. To them, a steamship flirtation is just the same as any other. What they want to know is if he can support their darling in the luxury to which she has been accustomed.

Perhaps he could, if he were not supporting some other couple's darling. The English parents make it their business to institute enquiries. They tackle the poor fond man himself, and learn to their horror that he is not only a husband, but a father. He means no ill. He will not lie to them. He is perfectly innocuous. Surely a man, on the Atlantic Ocean, is not obliged to marry every girl he flirts with. Why, he has taken this trip for rest and recreation, and these cold-blooded English propositions actually dare to suggest——

The American girl never asks a man to tell her the story of his life. She is generally too busy telling him hers. Nor will she cease to talk with him, in prim disgust, if she hears that he has been led to the altar. It may have happened very long



"Her father and mother see that she is flirting"

ago, and he may have nearly forgotten it. After all a man is not a criminal, to be ostracised from all flirtation, because somewhere beyond the horizon there is some woman who perhaps is praying for him—and who perhaps isn't! The American girl takes the goods that the gods send, and asks no questions. She may be sentimental, but it is not in the power of every Tom, Dick and Harry on an ocean steamship to appeal to her sentiment.

There is one thing that the pretty girl on board ship, who is flirting with a "married man," will always discover, when she knows that he is married. It is, that he "doesn't get along with his wife." He doesn't know why it is, but, somehow or other, she is not sympathetic. She doesn't *understand* him. She is a nice woman, otherwise he would never have married her, but she is unresponsive, and—oh, he does need the joy of appreciation! There is absolutely no excuse for divorce, for she is a good soul; still he has a dreary home-life. He is much to be pitied. It is really astonishing what a number of unhappy husbands an ocean steamship shelters. The marital unhappiness seems to come on during the trip.

"I'm so sorry for that young fellow who sits by me at table," said the prettiest girl on the ship to me, some time ago. "He is married. He married when he was a mere boy, before he realised what he was doing, and now he regrets it with every

breath that he takes. It is dreadful to think of, isn't it?"

It was not dreadful, but rather curious. Three days previously, as we were about to leave New York, I saw him fondly embracing his wife by the gang-plank, and promising to write by every mail, and—he added, "Do let the kids send me a line."

Poor chap! The pure ozone of the Atlantic Ocean was probably responsible for his strange hallucination. In three days it had done its fell work. This is the real peril of the Atlantic of which seamen do *not* prate.

For the benefit of parents who are novices on the ocean, it would simplify matters a good deal if the transatlantic Lothario were labelled. Still after a little experience, he is not a difficult problem. It may be set down as an unvarying rule that the nicest men on the ship are married. Whenever you see a young man who is "the life and soul of the party," who is jovial, unabashed, always dancing attendance on the ladies, perpetually self-sacrificing in his efforts to make them comfortable—well, he's married. The man who is the best dancer at the ship's hop, whose name is written on the programmes of all the choicest feminine pets of the passenger list, and whose contempt for the smoke-room hermits is the most picturesquely expressed—is the married man.

At the ship's dance the smokeroom is filled with

non-dancing men, who consume unlimited tobacco in honour of the occasion, and play frenzied bridge and poker. These non-dancing men have no use for the frivolities outside, could not be bought to take part in such Coney Island amusements and speak feelingly of the peaceful life. These are the eligibles, the unmarried. They leave the social pastimes of the ship to the butterflies, who are always married. They are careful. They decline to compromise themselves. They look askance at the parents of pretty girls. They will not permit any dowager mommer to "make a set" for them. They are not anxious to be "run after" and cornered. They are prudent, and avoid rousing fond hopes in the breasts of the susceptible. They steer clear of foolish entanglements.

What cares the "married man"? Nothing at all. His heart is as light as gossamer. He is "fancy free." He is having the time of his life. For him the gaities of the ship have been organised. Watch him two-stepping down the deck, in the very latest style, with one pretty girl after another, clasped unresistingly to his frilled and spotless shirt-front! He is whispering sweet nothings in her ear. He is tickling her creamy cheek with his moustache, if he happens to possess one, and if he doesn't he gets along very well—thanks—and he is saying sentimental things about the moonlight on the ocean. The longer he has been married, the nicer he is.

If you look upon this in a certain light—and it must be a very certain light—you will perceive that it is a delicate compliment to women. For the “married man” proves that wedded life has done much



for him. It has taught him how to appreciate the sex in general. He likes nearly all the women—except the very ugly ones. He can anticipate their wishes and make their trip worth while. And he does. He certainly does.

You see that handsome, loquacious Adonis, with the pretty girl in white? He has decided that she has been dancing too much. He is telling her how fool-

ish it is for her to over-dance, and exhaust herself. He is arranging her cloak, so that she shall not catch cold in the night air, for after a dance girls are particularly susceptible to cold. She is walking away with him to some quieter part of the ship, because he thinks it will be good for her. He is very unselfish. Much as he loves dancing, he will leave the giddy scene for her sake, and repair to the gloomy side of the ship, where there is no light, and life, and music, and festivity. She looks so tired, and he is so solicitous. Well, he's married.

Very often the gossip of the ship has it that Mr. So-and-So is engaged to the nice girl whose shadow he has become. All the other men on the boat, in brotherly consideration, keep away, unwilling to pose as spoil-sports. Mr. So-and-So never leaves her side. He is at breakfast with her (a tip to the second steward has yielded him the desired proximity at the saloon table); he is at luncheon with her, and through every course of the long dinner he is her other self. He promenades the deck with her; he sits beside her when she is steamer-chaired; he arranges her rugs around her; he fetches and carries for her; he frowns if she speaks to anybody. Everybody on the ship, from the Captain downwards, says that such a case has never before been seen. It is a genuine instance of love at first sight. Well, he's married.

Whenever you see a diffident, ramshackle sort of

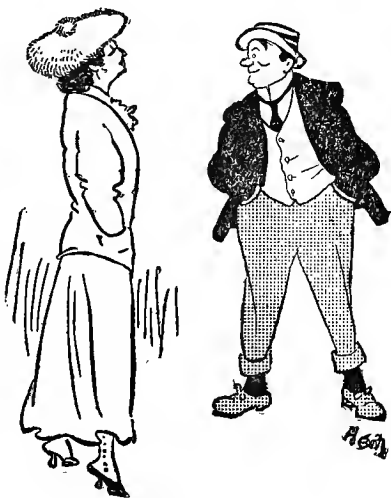
a creature, who sits alone, or promenades the deck with the New England spinster, and is somewhat surly, and inclined to over-read, and to over-sit, and to over-sleep; who has no life and no geniality, who takes a cynical view of the trip, and seems to want to get to wherever he is going—well, he's unmarried.

The "married man" never wants to get there—especially when he is going home. He is a philosopher, satisfied with the present. An anxiety to get anywhere when you are in charming society is a sort of left-handed compliment to the charming society. The "married man" is convinced that the ocean steamship is a good thing, and that he can enjoy himself more comfortably on board than would be possible in either London or New York. The life appeals to him—a butterfly in a "rosebud garden of girls." People who are always looking forward to something gorgeous in the future—which generally forgets to happen—are bores. They are also ingrates. The present is a "bird in the hand," the future is the "two in the bush." The "married man" is satisfied to leave the future to the vapid little nincompoops who are afraid that the girls are "setting their caps" for them. All this makes the "married man" delighted. Without him the trip would be as dreary as the desert of Sahara. He is positively fluffy with irresponsible joy.

Do not imagine for one moment that the "married man" is a disturber of the feminine peace. If

he be, it is because the feminine peace is perfectly willing and anxious to be disturbed. Girls do not invariably cross the ocean for their health, or just to get somewhere. They will flirt with somebody or something, or know the reason why. On board ship the maiden is not haughty, or unapproachable. If you wish her good-day, she does not draw herself up to her full height, and exclaim, "Sir!" She is waiting for somebody to wish her good-day, and is perfectly prepared to take the initiative, if necessary.

Even the unlovely girl, who on earth has a dull time of it, discovers different conditions on the ocean. With a little energy, and by the exercise of a certain amount of will-power, she often succeeds in unhooking a flirtation. She is very vivacious, and much to the point. She is a hard-worker, and she seems to be on her mettle. The conventions of the ship dispense with formal introductions, and she never has to wait for somebody to *ask*



to be introduced to her. The formal introduction is the undoing of so many women on dry land. It is a pity that the suffragette does not denounce the formal introduction. It is fatal.

During one trip I took particular pleasure in watching the "work" of one energetic maiden, who—poor thing!—belonged to the ranks of the unwanted. She lay idle for a day—just to give the ship a chance to settle itself, and also to make certain that she was likely to be unattached during the trip. At the end of the day she had evidently made up her mind that there was nothing doing. So she buckled on her armour, like a brave little Joan of Arc, and



rushed into the fray. She had one speech that she relied upon to help her. I heard her deliver it to eight men.

"I think Parrus is just a horrid place," she said. "I was there for two weeks, and, honestly, I was afraid to go out. The men stare at you so! They turn round, and look at you, and—several times, I was *followed*. I was so scared that I didn't know what to do. Now, I've lived in New York all my life, and I can safely say that I have *never* been followed. It is very distressing, is it not? Give me American men any day. To talk of the politeness and the courtesy

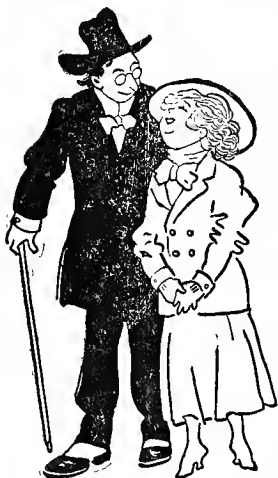
of the Frenchman is ridiculous. What woman likes being ogled in the public streets by these persistent mashers? Several times, I reached my hotel trembling and crying. I have never been accustomed to such treatment by American men."

Evidently American men have better taste than their French brothers. The victim of Paris' wiles, however, by injecting the "personal note" into her promiscuous remarks, managed to gain attention. It is the "personal note" that tells. A girl on board ship can talk for hours on impersonal matters, and



discuss the classics in every style, without spearing a flirtation. Let her get personal, and the result is exactly otherwise.

In the case I have just mentioned, success was reached at the end of the third day. On day No. 4 I saw the denouncer of poor old Paris promenading the deck with a tired-looking old specimen, from the wooly west, and she never released him until the boat docked in Hoboken. On land, this amiable creature might have worked for years, and probably had, without winning. The old specimen on board is easy prey, and he is always there. There is no fool like an old fool.



One of the most amusing flirtations I have ever seen, was that of a very nice little girl with her violin-teacher. He was going abroad to see his people, and she, with her mommer, had conceived the delightful idea of making the same trip. Now, I always think that anybody who teaches the violin, must have

Ham the constitution of a horse, and must be filled with loathing for his unhappy pupils. Perhaps this particular teacher shared my feelings as we left New York. At any rate, his

pretty pupil and her mommer did not seem inexpressibly dear to him.

But no sooner had we plunged into the bounding billows than that musical little lassie left her violin to the mercies of her stateroom stewardess, and "made" for the teacher. Mommer had evidently traversed the Atlantic before. Mommer knew what she was about. The violin teacher, after temporary struggle for liberty, born of the instinct of self-preservation, succumbed. She was a pretty girl, and an enthusiast. She was beside him all day, in an ecstasy of music. She looked into his eyes with the tender melancholy of Chopin; she sat in silent reverie with the dreamy wistfulness of Tschaikowsky; she was sometimes roused to the fervour and thunder of Wagner; she was light and coquettish in the merry moods of Planquette and Lecocq, and she never lost an opportunity of catering to the music that was in him.

The poor man was never left alone for a moment. She was known on the ship as his "star" pupil. She played at the concert, and he accompanied her. She was congratulated for his sake, and he was congratulated for hers. At first he used to try to run away, but he gave that up, for she followed him—and mommer followed her! This girl had been "studying" with him for a year, and there had been no flirtation. On land, escape is always possible. There are so many places to hide in. It was the sea that

did for him. It was the Atlantic Ocean that made the violin teacher look so good to her.

Whether this instructor ever succeeded in seeing his people, I never knew. It seemed highly improbable. In Amsterdam whom should I meet but teacher, and pupil, and mommer? In Brussels, whom should I note, seated at a café, but teacher, and pupil, and mommer? Even in Paris, which is a silly place for purposes of flirtation, there, on the crowded Boulevards, I saw that thin young violin teacher being towed along by pupil and mommer, who were protecting him from the insults of Boulevard life. What *can* there be in the Atlantic Ocean's ozone to achieve such wondrous results? Someday, perhaps, we shall know. I incline to the belief that it is a germ, a theory which always explains everything, and nothing, and is therefore very useful.

I have apparently omitted the "married woman" from the list of transatlantic flirts. Please do not think that the "married woman" sits by herself all day, and crochets comforters for the dear one, or even embroiders table-centres for "the home." The "married woman" is very often young and pretty, and there is no reason on earth why she shouldn't be.

She may have cried her eyes out on the dock, as she said good-bye to the cherished soul who had given her his name, and who was obliged to stay at home and slave for a living. She may have looked so intensely miserable that your heart went out to

her in swiftest sympathy, and the horrors of parting were brought vividly home to you.

Time heals all wounds—even on land. At sea it heals them by rapid-transit methods that do the work in a day, and sometimes sooner. The poor little wife, whose acute grief at the dock touched you so impressively, has dried her tears by the time the boat has passed Fire Island. Why grieve? He would not wish her to grieve. He would tell her to cheer up, and have a good time. And she does. She does not tat, or knit. She looks around her with altruistic eyes, and—well, she may as well make the best of it.

She *could* seek the acquaintanceship of some very nice old ladies who are members of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, and very good company. She *could* sit in the music-room (I regret to say that I have heard it called the hennery) and talk about servants, and household expenses, and little Susan's pinafores, with some sweet and domesticated matrons whom it would be a pleasure to know. She *could* parade the deck with the New England spinster, and have a very jolly time listening to that siren's persiflage.

Somehow or other, she indulges in none of these simple pastimes. Before long you note that she appears to be killing time quite agreeably with an exceedingly nice-looking young man, who is most attentive. Of course, she is telling him all about her husband, and her happy home life, and discoursing

on the joys of matrimony. He seems extremely interested. It is an interesting topic. She never appears to exhaust it either. Often, as you are taking your last prow around the deck, before turning in for the night, you come across them where the



lights are low, talking in subdued tones, and looking up at the stars. Perhaps he saw her grief at the dock, as hubby faded into the shadows, and is trying to comfort her aching heart.

When you say good-bye to the transatlantic passengers at the dock, and mop the furtive tears from your eyes as you see their anguish and heart-wrench, you imagine that he—or she—will weep steadily all the way over, and that there will be no solace, no balm in Gilead. Try and rid yourself of this erroneous belief. It is a mortal error. The transatlantic passenger, whether he, she, married, or unmarried, will be as jolly as a sandboy precisely one hour after you have dragged yourself wearily away from the cruel dock to the deserted home. You can safely reckon upon the Atlantic ozone to kill all grief, however demonstrative



it may have been in your presence. And is not that a glorious knowledge? Is it not food for rejoicing?

'Tis better thus, surely. The lassie will find recreation, the lad will unearth a pastime, the Benedict will secure comfort, the matron will discover salve. There is a very pretty song called, "Oh, Dry Those Tears," but nobody need sing it to the ocean traveller. His tears will dry spontaneously in the pleasant warmth of the flirtatious steamship. The way people weep at the farewell dock is extraordinary, but it is a custom, and all nicely regulated men and women like to do the right thing. It is always a comfort to know that one has done the right thing. Women sail away with red noses, and men with suspiciously rosy eyelids, and they are the very people who will be the merriest and most flirtatious people on board. The girl who is the most inveterate flirt on the ship is the girl who cried the most bitterly at the dock. The man whose farewells were the most protracted and painful, and whose agony you could scarcely bear to look at, is the man you will note as the gayest Lothario of the throng.

The swirl of the Atlantic seems to give the im-

petus to flirtation, and those who can resist it are the freaks of the trip. Of course, it *is* possible to abstain. The man who is travelling with his wife is often able to abstain. She sees to that. The wife who is travelling with her husband is also able to abstain, unless he happens to be busy in the smokeroom playing bridge. It *is* possible not to flirt, but it is very difficult, and it is very foolish to try not to do so. If you fail, you feel so silly. You realise that your will-power is not in good condition. You find yourself at it in spite of your resolutions. Moreover, why be eccentric? Why try to attract attention by marked originality, which is not all that it is cracked up to be? Why be a non-flirt, surrounded on all sides by flirts? I have no patience with such people, but I am obliged to admit that I have met very few of them.

What the briny deep doesn't do to the loving heart is not worth mentioning.

VIII

PATRIOTISM



UPPOSE that just to “make conversation” a perfect stranger came up to you, and told you that he considered the suit of clothes you were wearing the worst-fitting garments he had ever seen; that the cut was inartistic, the cloth poor and badly produced, and the general effect displeasing. Suppose he went on to say that the only tailor who could make a decent suit of clothes was his own, and asked you to cast an eye on his irreproachable attire, admirably conceived, faultlessly executed, comfortable, and yet picturesque. You would probably look upon this perfect stranger as an ill-bred boor, not worth answering, and bestowing upon him a haughty look of frigid contempt, you would turn on your heel and leave him, lamenting. You would think that he was lacking in the very first elements of courtesy.

On board ship you will meet scores of strange people who, while they would hesitate at abusing

your clothes, will make most uncomplimentary remarks about your country. They will tell you that they do not like your country at all; that they spent a few months there, and found everything most primitive, and behind-the-times; that they laughed at one thing, and fumed at another, and that if you wanted to see civilisation in its really advanced form, you must visit *their* country—the only country in the world worth living in, and worth studying.

At this you may not take umbrage. Even though such remarks may be as rude and as unnecessary as



comments about your clothes and your personal appearance, you must smile agreeably, and show no sign of vexation. For the people who boom their own country at the expense of yours, are—P A - TRIOTS!

You always meet patriots on an ocean steamship. There is no way of escaping from them. They are as thick and as inevitable as flies at a country boarding-house breakfast-table in June, and they are even more aggressive. However, you can have a great deal of fun with them. You can "draw them out," and revel in their absurdities, and you can study bigotry,

provincialism, and egotism on an ocean steamship as you can study them nowhere else. You find patriotism there in luxuriance and perfection. It is tinsel patriotism, of course, but it masquerades as the genuine article, just as many cheap things do ephemeral duty for more expensive ones. It is imitation patriotism. It is like the string of paste beads that Sarah Jane wears around her neck on Sunday, in flattering imitation of the gems she has noticed on her mistress' throat when that lady went forth to the opera.

Real patriotism is very much like religion—a sentiment not expressed, but *felt* in the innermost recesses. You are born in a certain country, just as you are born to a certain religion. Personal choice, in either case, is out of the question. You love your country unreasoningly, with all its faults; you respect your religion in a similar way, even though you may not live up to it. This is something deep-down and ineradicable. It is not particularly noble, when it is mere instinct, but it may emerge from that, and become intelligent appreciation and artistic satisfaction.

The real patriots, on an ocean steamer, are not the people who butt in on your natal idiosyncrasies, who tread on your pet corns, and who say impolite things with a sort of polite belligerency. They are not the people whose object it is to force your reluctant admission that their country is better than



yours. The real patriots are not controversialists; they are not the vain and foolish folks who feel a contempt for what they do not possess. The real patriots are the silent people. They are unnoticeable. They would scorn to subject their love of country to idle argument with strangers. They are serious, and not at all amusing. It is the others, the tinsel patriots, of whom there is a copious supply on every steamship, that add to the gaiety of nations—generally the nations to which they do not belong, but not infrequently to the very nations that claim them.

The tinsel patriot is the person who loves his country just because it is *his* country. He can see no good in any other that does not chance to have produced him. His country must be the best, because—well, there he is, an unanswerable argument in its favour, with his wife, and his children. He knows little of his country's history, and cares less, and as for any other country's history, it would be waste of time to bother with it. This delicious vanity and this exquisite conceit make

the tinsel patriot quite an entertaining pastime, humour.

The tinsel patriot of England pats himself on the back, and says what a good boy is he as he leaves the United States. The tinsel patriot of the United States, who has "done" Europe in a hurry, buys an American flag, and waves it ostentatiously on the home-going steamer. That the subject of patriotism is almost sacred never occurs to them. They are pleased with themselves, and they patronise their country very charmingly indeed. It is the least that they can do to show their country that it did a clever thing when it made itself theirs.

The tinsel patriot is lacking in all imagination. He can imagine nothing good in any country that has so far forgotten itself as to deny him birth. He visits other countries just to revel in their imperfections, and these imperfections it is his pleasing duty to "rub in." He glories in his work. His comparisons are always "odorous," and he spends his time looking for trouble, which he usually finds waiting for him. His patriotism is laid on with a trowel. It is inflicted upon every listener. It is heard above the murmur of the Atlantic on deck; it fights its way through the fumes of the smoke-room; it buzzes in the conversation at the dinner table; in fact, it makes things lively all the way over—and whichever way it is! It is a great recreation for the cosmopolitan hearer—the man who

finds "books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything."

The tinsel patriot loves to hear himself talk, and—does not talk in whispers. He wants the whole world to hear what he has to say! His impressions, he will tell you, with delightful diffidence, are nothing more than cursory impressions, but they are to the point. He declines to beat about the bush. What he has seen, he has seen, and he intends to abide by his decision. And he certainly will. The tinsel patriot takes very unkindly to argument—if he can find anybody foolish enough to argue with him. When I am there he can find me! I love to argue with him. Whatever his nationality may be, I love to plunge with him into dispute. Fiendish? Perhaps. But sometimes time drags, and I do not play shuffleboard. When the morn is bright on deck, I like to seek out the merry tinsel patriot, and let him give me fits. This may be a morbid taste, but 'tis mine own. On one occasion I met an Englishman who was going home with his wife and his sister-in-law, after six weeks spent in the United States. He was very droll.

"You see this watch," he said, holding up a gold hunter. "Well, I kept it at London time all the while I was in America. I simply would *not* change it. It seemed to me that to set my watch by the New York clocks would be unpatriotic. It made me feel that I was not so far away when I could look at my

watch, and see what time it was in London."

"It must have been very awkward," I suggested, thinking of the discomfort of breakfasting in New York



when his watch indicated two o'clock in the afternoon; of lunching at six o'clock in the evening, and of dining in the wee sma' hours of the morning.

"Not at all," he said. "I got in the habit of deducting five hours. I had to make allowances for so much when I was in the United States that I had no objection to doing it in the matter of time. I suppose if I had been going to *live* in the United States, I should have been obliged to adopt the time of the country. I should not have done it without a great struggle."

He was very proud of himself. He told everybody of his remarkable sacrifice. He confided to all the Americans on the boat that he was delighted to be going home, carrying with him the unbudging London time. And then he launched into the usual dissertations of the tinsel English patriot, on the overheated American rooms, and the bumpy American streets, and the discord and din of New York. He liked to jump out of his bed in the morning, and crack the ice in the water pitcher, instead of finding himself in a steam-heated apartment, ready to take

cold the instant he went out. He wouldn't live in New York if you laid gold at his feet. And nobody offered to do this.

His wife and his sister-in-law nodded their heads approvingly. They felt that he was doing his duty to his country by his impoliteness, which was, of course, patriotism. Yet this man was otherwise courteous. He would have been careful to avoid hurting the feelings of his fellowmen in any other direction. The tinsel patriot is like the dog with a bone. The dog may be a kind, gentle, docile, and sympathetic animal, but when he has a bone, he growls—leave him with it, and beware of him.

Many people travel, but few of them are travellers. They are merely tourists. English and American tourists explore the recesses of the world, apparently to discover points of resemblance with their own little niche. When these recesses differ from the niche, they differ unfavourably. I met a Hungarian who was going back to Budapest, after a year spent in New York and other American cities.

"I'm tired of it," he said. "One can't get anything to eat in the United States."

At first I thought that he was joking. There are many things that Americans cannot do, but they certainly can eat! It is a pastime of which they are very fond. But the Hungarian was serious. He missed his Hungarian dainties, his paprika'd deli-

cacies and the singularities of his native fare. I argued with him pathetically, for I had found Budapest's gastronomy somewhat difficult to fathom. He persisted. There was nothing to eat in America—but mere food. One wearied of food. It grew monotonous. He declined to go into detail. I expatiated touchingly on the glory of New York's restaurants, and sketched a few fashionable "lobster-palaces," where the epicures of the world had found nothing to criticise.

"I've been everywhere," he said, "and I was always hungry. American fare would kill me. I cannot endure it. So I return to my native land."

The French patriot has Paris Boulevards on the brain. He is disgusted with Broadway, and he says so in unqualified terms, though he is always very polite. When he meets you on deck he takes off his hat, even though he be going to tell you that he finds your country most unsatisfactory. Of course a steamship is neutral ground, and the patriot feels that he can be disagreeable with impunity. Moreover, the average tourist has



slighted his home for so long that he considers it his duty to do all that he can for it, now that he is returning. He has crossed the Atlantic for recreation in other lands—the villain! Many people *might* infer that his own land was not good enough for him to recreate in. He hastens to correct the error.

The American tinsel patriot is more amusing than the European article, because he is more ingenuous, and says such gorgeous things in defence of his native heath. He is particularly anxious on the *return* trip to let everybody know that what he has seen abroad has pained him acutely; also that he never intends to go again. (This is the patriot who, invariably, will make another trip next year.) He will probably be interviewed by the newspaper of his native town, and will be lovely to the extent of a column.

“New York has Parrus beaten to death,” said an American patriotess last year. “I was never so disappointed in my life. The women dress as New York women would scorn to dress, and I wouldn’t have my gowns made in Parrus if they gave them to me for nothing——”

“Do you mean to say you bought no dresses all the time you were in Paris?” I asked, feeling quite sure that she had a trunk full of Paris confections.

“Oh, I bought a few,” she said carelessly. “I want to show my New York friends what the much-

advertised Parrus gowns are like—how inferior they are. Why, I can go downtown in New York, and buy an elegant suit, ready-made—pay a trifle for alterations—and wear what everybody is wearing. You can't do that in Parrus. You can hunt all over Parrus for styles, and then have to tell a dress-maker what you want. In New York you buy what you have got to have, and there is no trouble at all."

This discussion was a bit too deep for me. Dry-goods stores *are* very interesting, of course, and very human, and the feminine patriot naturally glances at them in her travels. Still, I did not find that I could cope with the coquettish topic, so I switched off to other subjects.

"Admit," I said, "that Paris is a beautiful city. Now I ask you if there is anything in New York to compare with the Place de la Concorde?"

Floored, this time, I thought to myself triumphantly, not that I hold any particular brief for the Place de la Concorde. I was mistaken. The lady was not floored by any means.

"Oh, the Place *dee* la Concorde is all right," she said. "All right for Parrus. New York is too busy, and too progressive to waste places like that. The Place *dee* la Concorde is a wicked waste of space. We should have it filled with beautiful office buildings, thirty stories high, fitted up with marble inside, and with express elevators running to the top floor. The Place *dee* la Concorde looks very dreary

to me. You can have it, and you can give me Times Square in New York. They are lazy people, the French. I'd like to ask you where, in New York, you would find men sitting for hours at cafés in the open streets, drinking away the working day?"

"They are only drinking coffee," I piped meekly.

"They are an indolent set," she declared, getting angry, "and you know it. You are just trying to provoke me. If I found a husband of mine sitting out in the street, and looking at all the good-for-nothing creatures who pass by, well—he would hear from me."

"Your husband, I suppose, goes into a bar-room and takes a drink of whiskey?"

"Like a man!" she cried exultantly. "Yes, he does, and I'm proud of it. He goes in for his high-ball every evening, swallows it instantly, standing up, and then goes about his business. That is *our* way of doing things, and it is the only way. I've no patience with the French people, and I don't want to go to Parrus again."

"I love Paris"—maliciously.

"Then you ought to be ashamed to admit it. You are not loyal. If I loved Parrus, I should think myself a very poor sort of American——"

"But many Americans love Paris, and live there altogether."

"Let them!" she asserted, in woman's unanswerable way. "They can have it. I was born in Syra-



cuse, and I tell you that Syracuse could give lessons to Parrus any day in the week. Parrus belongs to the past; *we* belong to the future." And as she went away, all ruffled up, she added, "And I'm mighty sorry for *you*."

The tinsel patriot always has a duty to perform—to himself. He is anxious to maintain his self-respect by appreciating emphatically the environ-

ment that has made him what he thinks he is. Sometimes you see this brand of American patriot on board, with American flags all over him, and he takes good care that you shall notice them. He is going home. He had saved up for this trip for years, and has spent all his nice cash in other countries. Therefore the very least that he can do for his own is to buy a few flags with the residue of his depleted pocket-book, and wave them. He is very argumentative and fractious. The real patriots look at him in wonder, and marvel at his illogical comments. They run away from him, when they see him approaching, though I always find him most refreshing.

"London is a great one-horse village," remarked a patriot recently, settling the status of the English metropolis with one fell swoop. "I was there for a month, and couldn't get a glass of ice-water in my room to save my life! They don't seem to know what it means. Why, in the United States, you can get it anywhere, and it is looked upon as one of the necessities of life. They are 'way behind the times in London, with its rickety old busses and its tiny trains. Everything is little over there. With us, everything is big, and go-ahead, and significant."

"Was it your first visit there?" I asked.

"Oh, no," he replied promptly. "I go over every year, but *not* because I like London. The ocean trip does me a great deal of good, and that is why

I go abroad. If I wanted to have a good time, I should stay in New York. New York is good enough for me."

That is one of the stock phrases—"New York is good enough for me." It is like a creed. Everybody says it. It is almost catechismal. You find yourself murmuring it unconsciously. You whistle it. The machinery of the ship seems to hum, "New York is good enough for me." You repeat it to foreigners on board who have not yet seen New York; therefore, they cannot argue. Not that anybody ever attempts to argue when this stock-phrase is uttered. It admits of no argument, because it is so personal. "New York is good enough for me" does not insist that it is good enough for you. It merely infers it; it hopes it; it suggests it; it threatens it. You may be plunged in a heated argument in the smokeroom, and think that you are getting the better of it. You have just cornered your opponent; he is in a tight place, and you are wondering how he is going to squeeze out of it, when he says, "New York is good enough for me."

And there you are. That ends it. Further discussion is impossible. Nobody would think of saying, "New York is good enough for you, perhaps, but kindly explain why." That would be ludicrous. You would be regarded as a lunatic. When anyone says "New York is good enough for me," just take off your hat, smile sweetly, and run away and

play. The Italian does not say, "Rome is good enough for me," or the Frenchman, "Paris is good enough for me," or the Englishman, "London is good enough for me." It would sound very foolish, and you would immediately rush in with fervid arguments. You never argue when a New Yorker says, "New York is good enough for me." The remark is sanctuary. You cannot touch him; you would not dare. He is safely entrenched, and you fume for a moment, impotently, and—er—discuss the weather.

Once I met a very pretty American girl who had made a tour through Italy. She had stayed for several days in such towns as Verona, Padua, Ravenna, Bologna, and Pisa.

"I was *so* amused," she said vivaciously. "Mommer and I used to wander through the streets, and we laughed to kill ourselves. Honestly, it was the funniest experience I have ever had."

"I suppose the old buildings, the historical associations, and the quaint customs of the people amused you?" I suggested.

"Not at all," she replied. "It was the cut of the shirt-waists we saw in the shop-windows. You would have died! Such things! How any civilised people could even *think* such jokes, mommer and I couldn't imagine. We had thought of taking home a little present to a girl friend of mine in Boston, and I said to mommer that my friend would just love a pretty shirt-waist from Verona or Padua, or



"The tinsel patriot"

one of those old Italian towns. But she would have been insulted if we had bought her such stuff as we saw. I was surprised. I had heard so much of Italy. Everybody advised us to go there. It is a jay country."

"It is quite old," I murmured.

"Of course I know that," she said impetuously. "But how these old countries can be satisfied to stick in the mud, I can't for the life of me understand. A trip across the ocean, which is nothing nowadays, would show them what *we* are doing, and teach them how to live like human beings. It must be dreadful in Italy when all the Americans have gone home. I should hate it. In the Spring you do meet a few Americans at the Vatican and at St. Peter's in Rome. They liven things up, and make it seem a bit more home-like. I'm glad I have been, because I shall not have to go again. I would sooner spend a day in Washington than a year in Rome."

"Didn't your mother like it?"

"Oh, mommer was just miserable," she declared. "She missed her tea dreadfully, and all the comforts we have at home. Mommer's getting on, you know. It was like asking her to go backwards, to rough it, and to put up with every inconvenience. We had a much better time last year at Atlantic City. There is always something to *see* there—always new faces, and pretty gowns, and jolly people

who are *living*, and not existing. That is what *we* like."

I was just going to make a few pungent remarks, and see how this cunning little patriot took them, when she suddenly said, "New York is good enough for me." That put the brake on.

These must be extremely exaggerated cases of tinsel patriotism, you may say. Not at all. They may seem exaggerated, and that is why I set them forth in their unvarnished beauty, but they are very usual. They are quite peculiar to the ocean steamship. As soon as he is landed the exuberance of the tinsel patriot evaporates to a certain extent. He is back again in the land that gave him birth. That is quite enough for the land. The land has got him again, and should be satisfied. It is no longer necessary to throw any more bouquets.

Sometimes you meet a tinsel patriot who seems to be looking for a fight. He is just aching to inflict his views upon somebody. He dominates the ship, and declares that this is the happiest moment of his life. He has been abroad for a long time, and wants to meet real men, and real women, and to see real life. He does not say this with any intonation of genuine longing, but with a sort of "I-dare-you-to-put-in-a-word" inflection. He is superbly contemptuous of every country he has visited. He went abroad just to please his wife. Women get such insane notions in their heads. Women are never

satisfied to stay at home. The European bee is always buzzing in their bonnets. The old Adam lurks in this gentleman, for the woman tempted him, and he did eat.

This patriot always poses as a "good fellow." In the smokeroom he is very loud and demonstrative, but—a "good fellow." On deck he buttonholes you, and tells you "hard-luck" stories of how they



tried to "do" him in foreign cities, but how he always won out. He asserted himself wherever he was, he says. No matter if the over-charge amounted to five cents, he refused to pay it. In Europe the

American was regarded as lawful prey. It was his delight to rectify this error.

"In Amsterdam," he told me once, "I had the entire hotel aroused. The cabby who brought me from the station wanted to charge me three florins. Now I knew that the exact fare was two florins and a half. The fellow followed me into the lobby. I had the proprietor of the hotel, the clerk, the treasurer, and twenty guests around me. I was determined not to give in, just because I couldn't speak Dutch. I'm not a mean man, but I hate to be 'done'—by foreigners. And I won. I paid him two florins and a half, and he went away."

"In New York you would probably have paid five dollars," I said—like a fool, I admit.

"But Amsterdam *isn't* New York," he thundered indignantly. "A little pesky dirt hole like Amsterdam couldn't begin to be New York. I'm a good American, I am, and I want to show these people what we are made of. This cabby intended to overcharge me twenty cents! Do you understand—twenty cents? Well, I guess not. Oh, I don't say that cabs are not cheap in Amsterdam, if we compare them with our own. But why should we? Why should we be robbed? And we *are* robbed everywhere. That is what I complain of all over Europe. Wherever you go you are robbed, unless you are out on the war-path. Talk of honesty—they don't know what it means."

He was happy. He had been looking for this, and he was not going to relinquish it because we all moved away in affright. He followed us up. He told us how they had tried to rob him in Dresden and Leipzig and Hanover; his awful experiences in Switzerland; some happenings in Italy that were nearly tragedies, and some events in France that testified to French rapacity. He treated us to new stories every day, and we began to long for a sight of the wretches who had tried to "do" him. I learned subsequently, from the newspapers, that he was a bank-president, who was investigated rather sensationally during the recent panic.

Yet an ocean trip would be tedious without the tinsel patriot—bless his heart! He is generally very harmless, though noisy. He is usually kind, and he is very good to his mother. He means well. There is no real malice in this abuse of the countries in which he was not born. He just wants to show those countries what they missed, and—that is pardonable. After all, if you want to make a man feel pleased with himself, all you have to do is to praise his country. That is catering to *his* conceit. On board ship he does it for himself. There was one very popular actress who used to enlist the sympathy of the reporters in every town she visited by telling them that if she had been able to choose her birth-place, she would have selected their town. The number of cities in which she would like to have

been born was appalling. This is just an opposite view of the tinsel patriot on the ocean steamship.

On the transatlantic liner tinsel patriotism runs rife. If you had been born in a stable, you would be a horse, and would neigh your equine delight to all your fellow-passengers. You would say triumphantly, "A stable is good enough for me," and you would be quite sure that it was, and very thankful that no kennel had been your birth-place.

Yet at home you are not so touchy. There are even times when you are rather vexed that you were born at all. It seems *so* unnecessary.

IX

TIPPING



TIP, according to my dictionary, is "a sum of money given, as to a servant, usually to secure better or more prompt service." A tip, according to my experience, is "a sum of money, given, as to an adversary, usually to secure any kind of service at all." The

literature of tipping is generally confined to the newspapers, and occurs in the shape of letters to the editor, signed "Free American," "Democratic Reader," and other things equally untrammelled and pleasing.

Whenever you get a chance to read such letters—read, and digest them. Read them thoroughly. Convince yourself of the sheer immorality and the utter degradation of the tip. Learn that tipping is but

bribery in a modified form, leading nevertheless along the sinister thoroughfare that abuts on corruption. Appreciate the sublime and self-sacrificing sentiments of those sticklers for righteousness who refuse to pander to a proceeding that must end in the humiliation of the working classes. Listen to the eloquent words of the anti-tippers, emancipated and glorious, who, at great personal discomfort, have shaken themselves free from the chains of ugly, enthralling, and unnecessary slavery.

Then when you have completely assimilated all these ideas, and have endorsed their accuracy and their integrity, make up your mind *not* to go to Europe *via* the Atlantic Ocean. As there is no other way of getting there as yet open to the public, register your determination not to go until there is. It may be for ye-ears, and it may be for e-ever!

If, however, stern necessity, or sterner pleasure call you abroad, and the call will not be gainsaid, you must make the best of a bad bargain. You must be degraded; you must be humiliated; you must pander to an ignoble sentiment; you must listen to the clanking of those chains of ugly and unnecessary slavery. You must tip. Relinquish the anti-tippers to their noble yet resultless fight. Trusting that it will find them, as it leaves you, in the enjoyment of a perfect health of the season, and with kind regards to their family, in which yours joins, remain theirs truly. And let it go at that.

There is nothing that I enjoy so thoroughly as a dispassionate observation of the various brands of ocean-traveller, in this conflict with the ever-flourishing institution of tipping. My study has been so careful and so prolonged and so kaleidoscopic, that I could positively tell the stewards the precise amount that their various victims will contribute to their welfare. Strangely enough, the stewards



themselves never know, and make the most proteusque mistakes in their calculations. They are obsequiously polite to the people who will tip them with a bright smile and some cheap advice; they are "off-hand" and brusque to the passengers who will hand them gold and ask no thanks. Stewards "see" tips in unlikely places. They are ingenuous creatures. There are no tipping schools, where servants can acquire the knack of artistic expectation, and where they can learn to fathom the mysteries of the unseen pocket-book. Stewards should be mind-readers and purse-readers. They are neither. Some philanthropist — some floating Carnegie — should organise a school where stewards might learn how to guide their faith in the right direction. In the art of materialising tips, as in every other art, there is a right and there is a wrong direction.

Let me furnish a few instances of the stewards' irrelevancy.

You see that elegantly gowned lady who has just come on board at Southampton. She is very important, very fussy, and fearfully dignified. She carries a mysterious-looking box, from which the savour of priceless jewels appears to emanate. The bag *may* contain nothing more than her curls and her



make-up. Jewels, however, seem probable. She is careful to announce that she is travelling without a maid. Her maid was taken ill in London at the last moment. Maids are so thoughtless! They always "get things" at inopportune times. She is deeply chagrined. What can she do without a maid? This will be the first time that she has ever budged without one. Tears well up in her eyes.

The stewardess swallows the bait unhesitatingly. She rises to the occasion. She is all sympathy and all solicitude. She comforts the poor maid-less traveller. Madame will permit her to do all she can—and it is much—to contribute to her creature-comfort. She will brush Madame's hair, and massage Madame's face, and tuck Madame up in her bed. Madame thanks her in a forlorn way. She will endeavour to make shift with the stewardess' services.

And she endeavours, most successfully. She accepts them, and she monopolises them. The expectant and delighted stewardess waits on her hand and foot, neglecting many whom, by comparison, she regards as "small fry." Madame gets attention in gusts, and seems to regard it as her due. The stewardess, feeling that she has a "soft snap," thinks that she can afford to be haughty and apathetic with her other charges. And she is haughty and apathetic. Madame is her hope, her joy, and—things much more nutritious.

The lady goes ashore in due course. She thanks

the stewardess very prettily for her many attentions. She hopes to "cross" with her again, and intends to make a point of asking for her. In fact, she will mention her name to one of the members of the company who is a particular friend. She



hands her a coin—of about one-eighth the value that the obsequious hireling had fondly anticipated, and flits away. Oh, one thing more. She has left one or two things in her stateroom that the stewardess may keep. These things are per-

haps a rag of a kimono, a tattered skirt, and a dismantled corset.

The stewardess is broken-hearted. Another dream vanished! The neglected patrons, indignant at their treatment, forget her. Her trip has been fruitless. This is an incident that never varies. It is also one of the few cases in which experience fails to teach.

On one occasion I sat at table with a lady and her four boys—four fat, hungry, lusty youths of immature age. I knew her brand very well, but not so the steward. He reasoned in this way: Here is a woman travelling un-husbanded, with four troublesome sons. She will be intensely grateful for any extra attention. It will help her out of many difficulties. She is *the* tip of the voyage.

The poor chap immediately took possession of that transatlantic mother, and I watched his tactics with keen amusement. The four boys had the appetites of at least eight. They ordered three or four dishes at a time. They kept that steward running to and fro. The rest of us counted for little. We were just pimples. When he had a moment to spare he deigned to take our order, though he seemed vexed that we should have the temerity to want anything. It never occurred to him that we might need nourishment. The mother-and-four were the hopes upon which he built a stout edifice of tip. They ate like barbarians. They took bacon with marmalade, and tomatoes with sugar, and pie with meat. Anybody but a steward would have known immediately that such savages would not understand the gentle art of tipping. Tipping is, after all, a growth of civilisation—perhaps a wart thereon. Primitive people will never tip.



And it happened as I knew it would happen. At that fateful last meal, when the tipper comes to the surface, and the tippee watches him with perfervid eyes, the matron-and-four saw us all in the tip-throe. As she left the table, she took from her pocket a

few pieces of silver, and with a sweet and winsome smile, she said to the eager one: "This is all I have left of English money. I cannot use it, but I am sure you can." It was about eighty cents!

The expression on that steward's face absolutely



defied description. It mingled scorn with bitter disappointment, rage, disgust, sorrow, anxiety, and—best of all—remorse. The remorse was what interested me, for we were avenged.

The steward on an ocean steamer judges by appearances. The flashy passenger, with the loud voice and the diamond headlight, who invariably dons evening dress (and sometimes accompanies it with tan shoes) looks good to him—much better than the silent, unobtrusive little chap who seems half afraid of giving trouble, and is always polite. It is the former who *always* secures the steward's most lavish endeavours; it is the latter who is persistently slighted. And the tip emanates from the latter; rarely from the former. The former is a brow-beater, and not inclined to pay for what he considers his due. He

throws a coin at his servitor before leaving the ship, and it is usually less than the amount prescribed by alleged tipping authorities.

People from the wild and woolly west are exceedingly droll. It is as good as a farce to study them. They frequently ask for information on the malignant subject of tips. They have heard people on board talking about it. Is it the correct thing to give the stewards anything? If so, why is there no fixed tariff? And how is it that the steamship companies do not include service in their expensive fares? And is it not an outrage to pay other people's servants? And so on. How much must they give it? Why not hand it to the purser, and let him make the distribution?

Contrary to what many people think, it is not overtipping that has ruined the quality of stewardship; it is undertipping. That the quality has been ruined is beyond question. Kind old ladies from "prohibition" states, who tip with a temperance tract and a blessing; free and enlightened cranks, who decline to degrade the working-classes by meaningless gratuities; the extraordinary people who democratically regard the stewards as "equal," call them





by their Christian names, and tell them their family histories; arrogant upstarts, who refuse to be made a party to "blood-sucking," the hopelessly ignorant, who know no better—these are the people who give the poor steward his pangs—pangs for which willing tippers are forced to pay.

So it happens that very often the suffering steward cares for nobody, no, not he, 'cos nobody cares for him! He is surly indifference until the last day, when he becomes sinister attention. For, after all, thinks he, it is the last day—and not the first step—that counts! He leaves you severely alone during six full and beautiful days, and on the seventh—he brings tea to your room, brushes your clothes for you, smooths out your wrinkles, and tells you that it is going to be lovely weather. He has never bothered about the weather before, even though it may have played all sorts of pranks with your peace of mind. In fact, this is apparently the first time he has ever noticed weather. You do not feel as grateful to him as you would have done if he had buoyed you up with affectionate remarks about the weather on—say, the second day out.

Poor old chap! I am always sorry for the steward. He has a dog's life. He is usually a very decent, hard-working, kindly-hearted fellow, but he expects his tip, which should be made compulsory, is so easily gulled by blatant behaviour. His life is a series of disillusionments. He is never a student of human nature. That which glitters is to him invariably gold.

But I cannot love the "last day" steward, however much I may try. I cannot feel a deep-rooted affection for the menial who says most emphatically "Good-morning" to me on the seventh day, and who, on the preceding days, has taken pains not to see me as I passed by. He is actuated by human motives—I know that—but there are some human motives that are less desirable than others.

Sometimes I feel impelled to help the poor steward. I see him tucking up some fair dame in her steamer-chair, plying her with sweet attentions, arranging her cushions, and bombarding her with zealous thought, when I know too well that she will never "materialise." It is



written all over her face, in handwriting that is unmistakable to me. But she wears diamonds, and expensive furs, and is "made-up" for the morning deck, and the will o' the wisp lures him to his destruction. Far—far better, if he were to devote himself to that poor little nobody, sitting alone at the other end of the deck, and apparently pining for a whiff of attention. But *she* wears no jewels; her hair is rammed into a cheap "tam o' shanter," and she exudes no flavour of prosperity. I long to tell him that she will "tip"—that her tip will be the outward manifestation of gratitude. It is gratitude that is the surest tip-extractor.

Seriously, the last day on board—the tipping day—is a trying occasion. You feel oppressed by a



large variety of conflicting emotions. Somehow or other, your sense of humour dries up, and you find yourself humour-less, unable to see fun in anything. You are confronted by the difficult problem of doing the right thing in the right way. You want to go ashore with the memory of smiling faces wishing you good luck. And what is the price of a smiling

face? Is there any reduction if you buy smiling faces wholesale?

There is no standard for the tip. It is left hopelessly to your—er—indiscretion. The man who over-tips is a fool; the man who under-tips is a knave. You are not anxious to be either. Some people would rather be a knave than a fool. I cannot see that one is comelier than the other. Strange menials appear, and smile at you—menials you have scarcely



seen. They come from the bowels of the ship; many of them appear to have dropped from the sky. The boy who blows the bugle for dinner suddenly seems to have conceived a violent fancy for you. A sooty-faced individual introduces himself to you as "the boots"; a suave sailor announces that it was he who

chalked the deck for shuffleboard. A lad who ran errands for the officers looks at you hopefully. Oh, you do want them to remember you pleasantly! But unless you happen to be a millionaire, or an anti-tipper on principle, you grow befuddled. You see the distant shore, and you wish you were there. There is nobody to help you; nobody to give you a hint. Each passenger tips, or doesn't tip, according to his conception of the rôle. It is a dreadful moment for the ultra-sensitive. It is even a cruel moment. As for that bugbear, the right thing—what is right for you is wrong for your neighbour, and what is wrong for you is right for your neighbour. It is bewildering. It is an inextricable labyrinth.

It is as bad as the predicament in which the London cabby places you. With the London cabby you are as much at sea as you are on any ship. To underpay him is to be cursed; to give him his exact fare is to be near-cursed; to over-pay him is to get a "Thank you" and a smile. You hate to adopt similar tactics on board ship, but the cabby's tip is a very near relative to the steward's gratuity. Nor can you settle either by any fixed rules, as I tried to do with a cabby on one occasion—and only one!

It was the result of various sickening experiences with London cabby. I had been "done brown" so many times that my friends had laughed at my weakness most provokingly. Therefore, I made up

my mind firmly to be strong and non-vacillating. A Londoner laid me down what he called an unvarying rule. "Take out your watch, old chap," he said, "and while you are in the hansom, hold it in your hand. Look at it carefully, and note the number of minutes the trip takes. Then, reckon at the rate of a penny per minute. If it be under twelve minutes, you cannot of course give the cabby less than a shilling, plus his tip. Anything over twelve minutes, pay at the rate of a penny a minute, and give him fourpence for himself. He'll thank you. He'll take off his hat to you."

How grateful I was for this! I had lovely visions of a bottle-nosed cab-driver doffing his hat and making affable remarks about the weather. These visions were delicious to me. The realities had been so sad, and so costly.

That afternoon I visited a theatre outside the London radius, and took a hansom—this time, without any misgivings, for I felt that I at last owned the key to the situation. Usually I am full of gloomy forebodings in a hansom cab; this time I was light-hearted and joyous. Out came my watch, and it was my pleasure to note the minutes as they flitted by. It is wonderful what a quantity of ground can be covered in one minute by a fleet hansom cab. We reached the outlying theatre in exactly eleven minutes by my veracious time-piece. Eleven minutes! That would mean, according to my friend's

regulations, that if I gave the cabby one-and-fourpence—a shilling for his fare and fourpence for his tip—he would thank me, and then take off his hat.

The old habit of handing cabby a tentative sum, and then shutting my eyes and hoping for the best, was about to assert itself. I straightened myself up, however, rushed into the breach, and handed my pilot one-and-fourpence, with a bright yet dignified smile. Then I waited to see him doff his hat, and murmur "Thank you."

The cabby, at first, seemed paralysed. Then he grew apoplectic. His eyes appeared to bulge from his head. He jumped from his perch, and let loose a torrent of alleged language that would dry up any ink. I was surprised, of course, but firm. Let him enjoy himself. I had done the correct thing, and I fully proposed to stand by it. Naturally I felt a bit disappointed, for I did want to see him doff his cap, and he looked as though he were going to doff mine! No matter. I walked gracefully away, and entered the lobby of the theatre, which was filled with a *matinée* crowd of men and women.

By my side was—cabby! He was asking in stentorian tones if I thought I was a gentleman, and what I meant by refusing to pay my fare. He would call the police—he would call every policeman in London—before he would be swindled. The theatre-lobby seemed to echo his words. The crowd of ex-

pectant theatre-goers grew interested—intensely interested it seemed to me. They stopped in their purchase of theatre-tickets, for here was a free show. They formed a ring around us. I grew paler; the cabby grew redder. It was a ghastly predicament. Even if I had right on my side—and I began to doubt it—what was the use of it? My resolutions crumbled; my firm determination evaporated. I caved in! I asked him in wavering, cringing tones how much he wanted, and was prepared to yield up my little all. He wanted exactly three times the amount I had given him, and he got it. That, he said, was the precise fare without a tip.

I was really quite grateful to him for accepting it. I might just as well have spared myself this scene, and have done what everybody else does. But somehow or other one hates to be green-horned. One prefers to be liberal in one's own way instead of being clubbed into a cabby's idea of liberality. This was an odious experience. I firmly believe that the cabby would have bought a seat for the play, and have sat through the piece, muttering *sotto-voce* imprecations in my ear, if I had declined to succumb. He went away, well-pleased and smiling. That also riled me. I felt that he had paid himself for his "anxiety of mood."

Well, the taxi-cab has reduced all these grievances to a minimum. Thank a progressive age, and a peace-loving age, for the taxi-cab.

On board ship, however, there are as yet no taxi-stewards. There probably will be. I should like to see some sort of arrangement by which the steward is equipped with a disc on his shirt-front that registers the exact amount of attention he gives to each of his patrons. Why not? This would furnish you some faint inkling of the correct thing to do, and to show extra appreciation you could multiply it or add to it. At any rate, it would supply a standard. The taxi-steward would be one of the greatest of all modern improvements on board ship. A fig for the stateroom telephone! A fig for the electric hair-curler! A box of figs for the whole set of labour-saving appliances! What we need is the taxi-steward, registering his indebtedness, and making that fateful last day less terrifying and anxious.

Some people who would like to be anti-tippers, but lack the necessary grit, and whose gratuities are imperceptible to the naked eye, say reassuringly: "What does it matter? We shall never see them again." What a mistake! These half-tipped menials will haunt their lives. They will occur at the most inopportune moments. They will be on some other ship. They will be found in hotels. They will be recognised as butlers in friends' houses. They will sneer and jibe. They will spread slanderous reports. They will upset one's dignity, one's poise. They will nourish a fearful revenge. There will be no escape from them.

"We shall never see them again." Oh yes, you will, and they will see you first. They will cast a shadow on your happiness. They will loom up as your past! Like the hero in the play, you will sprout a past, and it will hurl itself at you when you least expect it. Go easily, ye optimists, who murmur: "We shall never see them again." Never is a long time.

To some, tipping seems easy, and even luxurious. It is neither. It is graft on a small scale, but the problem of graft is a very complicated one, because it is so tacit. All regulated expenditure is simple. It is the unregulated expenditure that abounds in difficulties. The steamship companies sometimes print announcements to the effect that servants are not permitted to *ask* for gratuities. They think that kind. I call it malevolent. I should like my stewards to come to me like honest grafters, before the boat sailed, and make a deal. I should like to know exactly what they consider the square dishonest thing, so that I might do that square dishonest thing—honestly. It is unjust being kept in suspense. There is always a sword of Damocles hanging over the heads of transatlantic passengers, to descend on the day of landing. I have seen stout men quail, and stouter women quiver like jellies.

There are some publications on the subject of the ocean trip that attempt to give you advice on this matter. You are told the amount that is "usually"

given to the bedroom steward, and the table-steward, and the others. This always reminds me of my "penny-a-minute" experience with the London cabby, though I am bound to admit that I have never noticed any scenes on the dock resembling that episode in the theatre-lobby. The ship's stewards are never bottle-nosed, and sometimes they do not even speak the English language. Their inability to use English "cuss words" must save many passengers from perilous moments of overwhelming interjection.

Gradually, after prolonged experience, one gets used to tipping, as eels get used to being skinned. One tips everybody who looks tippishly-inclined, especially after having visited the hotels of Italy and Switzerland, where grave and portentous creatures, wearing much gold braid and many gold buttons, swallow tips voraciously. When I left my hotel in Rome, I tipped a man who had never done any earthly thing for any of us. He generally stood on the stairs, in our way, as we descended. When he saw us he got out of our way and smiled. I suppose I tipped him for getting out of the way. He might have refused to move, and then we should have had to jump over him. In some hotels the menials stand in a sort of kiss-in-the-ring circle around you, and you give to each a "little something," for you do not wish to miss your train. I often wonder why we do not tip the hotel proprietor, the architect who designed the hotel, and the labour-

ers who erected it. If they stood around on the last day, I dare say we should tip them. I should. No more scruples will ever be recorded against my account. Mine not to reason why.

To the constant traveller, therefore, the transatlantic tip is not quite as vexatious as it is to the non-traveller. He has become partly inured to the process, even though it will spring incessant surprises upon him. He may think that he knows it in all its possible variations, but there will be some new variation to delight his soul. The non-traveller is amazed and discomfited. It is he who writes to the papers, possessed of a delicious grievance, and perhaps in some sympathetic editorial he finds balm. That balm will be healing—until he sets forth on his travels again. Then he will immediately discover that it was a temporary, and not a permanent, cure.

Women are the worst tippers. The process hurts them—not that they are lacking in generosity, but simply because they reason about it. Have you ever studied a group of shopping women at a bargain-counter in Manhattan's big stores? Have you ever watched them haggling over a cent, estimating values, and lost in opaque reflection? Well, just think of these women confronted with the awful problem of tipping, which in many cases is tantamount to giving something for nothing! The idea is certainly droll. Yet these women are very fre-

quently ocean-travellers. Would you like to be their expectant steward?

The man who hesitates about his tip is lost. There is no scope for reasoning. There may be every apparent reason for withholding the tip—neglect, impoliteness, apathy. Tip just the same, and just as much—for your own sake, for your own peace of mind, for your own self-respect. Tell nobody. Do not brag about your generosity. If you do, you will meet somebody who alleges that he has doubled you—and you cannot re-double. You will, therefore, feel small and squirmy. Do not believe what your neighbour tells you as to the size of his tip. He may be truthful, but in this matter I consider that it is perfectly pardonable to lie. It is even justifiable. Truth is one of my strongest weaknesses, but if a man be fool enough to tell me what he gave his steward-of-the-table, I am not going to be outdone when one pleasing little lie will see me through. Never. I may evade the issue. If, for example, he says, "I gave my bedroom steward twenty-five dollars," when I have merely tipped mine five dollars, I may remark, "Well, I think that is just about right. You couldn't reasonably have given him less." I say this quite tranquilly, because I know that he has *not* given him twenty-five dollars. If he had, he would have told me fifty dollars. Confide in nobody. That is the safest policy. Everybody is uneasy on the subject, which is such a vague one, and so muddled.

It is best wrapped in the mantle of silence. Disturb not the cloak of Monna Vanna!

When you have tipped, look neither to the right nor to the left. Run away, and let the breezes on deck fan your fevered brow. You may have done right; you may have done wrong; but you have played the part of tipper as you conceived the rôle. Your "reading" may differ from that of your neighbour. But it is your reading, and perhaps you have been very original—quite terribly and disastrously original!

X

NERVOUS PASSENGERS



EAR of the sea is an inheritance. It comes to us from a long array of land-lubber ancestors—annoying predecessors who insist on bequeathing us some of their uncunning little ways, and take care that we never start in life with a clean slate. They always

leave us something—that we don't want. We fear the sea to-day for no other conceivable reason than that these silly old ancestors feared it. I'd like to meet some of my very remote ancestors, face to face, for a quarter of an hour, just to tell them what I think of them. Inheritances that one cannot cash are such dreadful things that one can scarcely blame Ibsen for waxing morbid on the theme.

However accustomed you may become to ocean travel, you never quite forget the foolish and illogi-

cal idea that the sea is a risky thing. The notion of the "perils of the ocean" is imbedded in our substance. And very funny that notion seems to-day. The alleged "perils of the ocean" loom up as broadly farcical. The pampered autocrat who sleeps under silken covers in a "deck suite"; who nourishes himself with all the expensive delicacies of a luxurious age; upon whom noiseless menials dance an obsequious attendance, and whose avoirdupois increases visibly during the trip from Sandy Hook to the Lizard, still feels in his inner self that he is battling with the "perils of the ocean." What he would feel if he were lashed to a mast and fed on hard tack, it is impossible to imagine. Perhaps he would look upon that fate as the "humour of the ocean."

The sense of insecurity in the midst of what, compared with the perils of land, is really double-barrelled security, may not be analysed. It is our endowment. Let us not look a gift horse in the mouth. Some of us temporarily forget our inheritance, and firmly believe that we have no sense of any risk, as we step blithely across the gang-plank to our floating hotel, but the idea is there just the same. It is latent, and it is always ready to pop out and disarm us.

If it were not for those irrepressible old ancestors, we should give the ocean steamer the credit that it deserves, and acknowledge that for one week,

at any rate, it sheltered us from the abnormal and soul-racking perils of land—from roaring trips in subterranean tunnels, from rickety ascensions in apathetic elevators, from the exhilarating uncertainty of the raging motor, and from the insidious attack of the bogey-thing we call by the pet name of microbe, or germ, or bacillus. We should feel that the isolated liner, moving spendidly across the face of the waters, removed us from civilisation's perils. We do not feel this—just because of ancestors that were forced upon us, and for whom we have no use whatever. It seems too bad, doesn't it? And to think that the only time one ever sees one's ancestors is at night, after a Welsh rarebit, or a lobster *à la* Newburg, when it is quite impossible to give them a piece of one's mind!

Relics of the barbarous notion of sea-peril confront us relentlessly, even before the steamer sails. The dock is crowded with wailing ones, there to say a last good-bye, with a display of grief so picturesque that it might have been designed to decorate an expedition to the North Pole. The loved ones are about to embark. Night will set in, and they will be miles and miles away, struggling with the dark fury of the Atlantic. Tears are shed by the sad people who are left to mourn.

The passengers who are just aching to get away grow a trifle timid of course. The lamentations of the mourners coax forth the old idea of the perils of

the ocean. Farewell gifts are lavished upon them with lugubrious generosity. These gifts do not vary much. There are unbudging fashions in this style of mourning. One notes the cushion on which "Bon Voyage" has been embroidered by some dear, fond hand. The happy traveller bursts into tears as this wonderful thought is handed to her. Occasionally it has "Good Luck" on it, but the French inscription is much more popular. Gorgeous floral pieces are sent to the ship—very much like those that are sent to funerals. Unconsciously one looks among the flowers in the saloon for "The Gates Ajar." People spend fortunes on flowers for departing



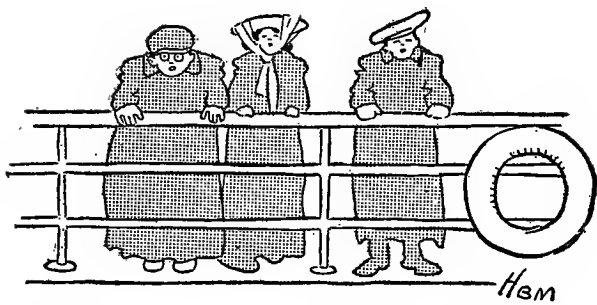
sailors, though the exact reason why a lovely garden's blossoms should always typify the end, I have not discovered. The ship's saloon is all aglow with the splendid tints of the flowers. Cards are attached to each piece, just the same as at a funeral. The difference is the omission of condolences.

Gifts of fruit and candy seem a trifle more cheerful. They imply that the dear departing one may perchance be able to eat them, which is a more optimistic idea. Most sailing day presents, however, are the result of impenetrable pessimism, symbolic of the aged notion that the ocean is a mighty, cruel monster.

The departure is intensely pathetic. A bell rings. A stentorian voice calls out, "All visitors for the shore!" It is the last moment, which is sad on principle. Friends prepare to leave the miserable passengers to their fate. They have done all they could for the poor things. They have inspected the staterooms, full of compassion for the unfortunates doomed to spend a week in such stuffy quarters. You listen to strange comments.

"To think of *you* in this little cubby hole all by yourself for a week," says a fond mother to her helpless boy. "Oh, *why* did I let you go?" And she bursts into tears.

"Is *this* where you sleep?" asks a doting wife of her curiously unmoved husband. "Oh, you poor, poor thing!" And she sobs on his shoulder.



"Dear little creatures! May Heaven protect you, and bring you safely through all peril," murmurs grandmamma, as she views the children's stateroom. "How dreadful it all is!" And the poor soul creeps away, the tears coursing down her furrowed cheeks.

The bell has rung, however, and the inevitable must be faced. Some fond relatives cannot bear to leave the ship so callously. It is all so cruel. They see the Captain, who is terribly busy, and a trifle fractious. They pounce on him, and ask him if the weather is going to be fine, and if he has any idea what time the ship will arrive on the other side. The Captain loves to be asked such questions, but he carefully conceals all evidence of such love. He answers very brusquely that he "really couldn't say," although he may be dying to tell them that it will be calm all the way over, and that the boat will arrive at sixteen minutes past two on the afternoon of Thursday week.

Then the mourners troop down the gang-plank, turning occasionally to glance at the loved ones on the ship, who look "so natural." It is most melancholy. Even if you happen to be running away from your creditors, you feel sad and forlorn. This trip may have been the dream of your life, but the farewells are so touching that you are hopelessly depressed. You are going to the "old" world, but you might be starting for the "next" world, so final is the atmosphere. Friends all seem so anxious to take a "last look" at you! They troop to the end of the dock to see your silent exit—almost as though they wanted to make quite sure, and see with their own eyes, that it *was* your exit—and no mistake about it. They wave tear-soaked handkerchiefs. You can almost hear those dear ones murmuring, as the ship moves: "Well, he's gone!" or "That's the last of her!"

The real truth is that these well-meaning but tradition-riddled dear ones go sadly away to the perils of land, while the sailors are moving slowly towards the glorious security of the sea. The dear ones weep for the departed who are at the mercy of a jolly Captain, as they confide themselves to the care of an ungodly chauffeur. Seriously, tradition is a farce. If passengers could cross the ocean in a passionate automobile, nobody would shed a tear; but just because the trip is made in a dispassionate ocean steamer, everybody weeps.

So, as you move slowly away, the idea of old ocean's peril, dormant in your subconsciousness, has been lured to life. Your heritage asserts its power, and you remember that the sea is wet and deep. The first thing that strikes your eye as you reach your stateroom is the curious decoration of its



ceiling. This is ornamented with life-belts! They give you a shock. It seems ominous. Why are the life-belts there? Why are there instructions outside teaching you how to adjust them? It is a gruesome sight—those life-belts with no passengers in them.

Departing friends have made you feel nervous, and you stand and look at that array of life-belts. They conjure up nice old ideas of ocean's peril. For one hectic moment, perhaps, you see yourself floating on the heaving bosom of the Atlantic, garbed in a life-belt, scanning the horizon for "a sail." It is quite ghastly. Nervous passengers never fail to regard the life-belts, and to read the instructions for their adjustment. Possibly, some try them on, though they do not boast about it. In fact, the life-

belts are never discussed. They are a sort of tabooed subject. You see your room-mate looking at them fearfully, but you say nothing. You hope that he will say nothing. There are some topics that it is best to avoid. Just the same, you make up your mind to adjust a belt, when you are quite alone, and see how it works. When you have made that resolution you feel much better—almost as though the life-belt had saved you.

Nervous passengers are not at all ashamed of their condition. They glory in it. They seem to consider it due to refinement, and to look upon non-nervous passengers as rather brazen creatures, lost to all sense of subtlety. They are always looking for trouble, and appear to be quite vexed that their quest is so futile. Sometimes they tell you that they never sleep at night; that they decline to let themselves sleep, and that they are worn out with their vigil.

The fog horn drives them distracted. I will admit that there is sweeter music than this Wagnerian *leit-motif* of the mist; also that the automatic regularity of the instrument is not conducive to slumber. Nervous passengers hear it, and scent immediate danger. They refuse to be comforted. They are hopelessly "rattled." The fog horn that continues all through the stilly night sounds like the "crack of doom." Timid people find themselves waiting for an answer. Sometimes they lie in their bunks,

expecting the grand bump! People who have no fear in the sleeping car of an express train, running on rails, look confidently for collision at sea, just because a veil of fog has descended. They envy the loved ones on shore, and wonder what impelled them to brave the "perils."

Of course nobody could possibly feel any very ecstatic affection for the fog horn. It is not a lovable thing. Passengers who complain about a lack of everything on board ship never complain about a lack of fog horn. Sometimes its first blast wakes them out of a sound sleep, and plunges them into an agony of apprehension. One cannot help feeling sorry for them, but it is often difficult to give them as much sympathy as they exact.

If you have been cold-blooded and nerveless enough to sleep through the fog horn's uncanny doings, never admit it. That is a piece of advice that I must strongly emphasise. The very first thing you will be asked in the morning is, "Wasn't the fog horn dreadful?"

If, in a spirit of bravado—also in accordance with the strict truth—you remark that you slept soundly, and never heard the wild blasts, you will be regarded as a brazen, conscienceless fibber, as well as a mean, unsympathetic, and bragging outcast. Nobody will believe you. Nervous passengers will consider that you are laughing at them. You may even be accused of having looked upon the wine when it was red.

Even in the smokeroom, where everybody laughs at the fog horn in the day time, you will not be popular if you confess that you did not hear it at night. You will seem to be taking a mean advantage of your fellows. The man who can sleep when everybody else is awake does not cut a happy figure.

Tell the lady who informs you that she never slept a wink all night; that she was dreadfully frightened; that she had her jewel box all ready for the life-boats; and that she never really expected to be alive in the morning, that you are not surprised. It was indeed terrifying. If the Captain wants to make the hit of his life—and he generally does—he will rejoice the timid passengers by informing them that it was the very worst fog he ever saw on the Atlantic; that it was almost impossible to cope with it; that he had sat up all night in dumb misery, and that—well, he had pulled the boat through. Etcetera, etcetera. Some Captains are very kind in that way. Nervous passengers love to believe that their nervousness was legitimate. They are happy to learn that a little “blow” was a cyclone, or that no other ship could possibly have behaved in a storm as admirably as this particular ship. Some Captains also are not very kind in that way, and nervous passengers are extremely displeased to hear that the fog was the “usual thing on the Banks,” and that the furious driving storm

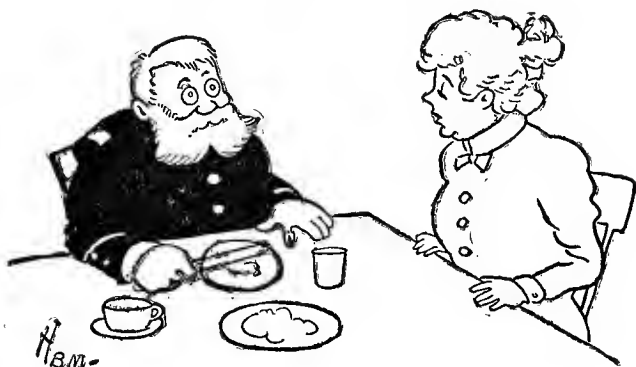
was a delusion. They are sure that it was a cyclone, and that the Captain is "keeping it from them." On the chart, next day, they are quite indignant to note that the sea, which they diariied as "mountains high," is chronicled as "moderate."

Nervous passengers watch the Captain as a cat watches a mouse. They take particular interest in his meals. The Captain's food plays a very important rôle with them. Sometimes they are horrified to see him calmly taking his dinner in the saloon while the ship is prancing around frantically. They wonder if he is shrinking his duty and overlooking his work on the "bridge" for the mere creature comforts of the table. They whisper; they are very concerned; they watch every morsel that the poor man puts into his mouth; they note, in perturbation, the close attention that he pays to the various courses. I have heard them gently hint at these sentiments.

"I suppose you are in a hurry to get to your post on deck?" said a timid lady to the hungry Captain last year, as she watched him poring over the *menu*, while the ship was executing a pleasing *pas seul*.

"Not all, Madame," replied the Captain, as he gave a leisurely order to his own obsequious steward. "I'm very comfortable, thanks."

The lady looked meaningly at her companion on the right. Her companion nudged her. She returned to the fray. "It is a good thing to take one's



time at meals," she resumed, with a little nervous laugh, "but I presume that you daren't stay very long at table."

"I certainly dare," responded the Captain, in gayest humour. "I have a very good appetite. Hope you have. This nice weather makes me hungry."

"Nice weather!" ejaculated the lady, holding on to her soup-plate. "Well, I declare! You are joking, Captain. Is the—is the—er—ship in any danger?"

The Captain bit his lip. He called the steward, analysed the *menu* very deliberately, questioned the steward as to the possible merit of certain dishes, and made his selection. Then he turned to the lady: "I hope not, Madame," he said, with a catch in his voice.

She could stand it no longer. This was the last straw. "If you think you ought to go on deck, Captain," she suggested delicately, "we will excuse you. Of course, we like to have you with us. Still—I feel very nervous, and so does Mrs. Smith. Don't you, dear?"—to the neighbour.

"Quite," asserted dear. "We like you very much, Captain"—with a titter—"but we'll let you go, if you think it necessary."

Did he? That Captain seemed to be suddenly gnawed by hunger that was extraordinary. He went all through the bill of fare at a steady canter. He was good-natured and happy, as most Captains are. He did not request the nervous ladies to confine themselves exclusively to their own business. He just sat there and enjoyed himself until, in desperation, the timid ones rose and left the table.

"They think I'm making them nervous," he said to me when they had gone, and he had laughed heartily. "If I had appeared to heed them, and had gone upstairs, they would have been much more nervous. They would have retired to their state-rooms, to collect their jewels, say their prayers, and hope for the—er—worst. Oh, I know 'em. I let 'em alone."

The absence of the Captain from the saloon is noted with much apprehension by timid people, who are also scared at his presence. He can do no right. They are alarmed if they see him eating; they are

frightened if they do not see him eating. In the former case, they affect to believe that he is negligent; in the latter, that he is responding to urgent calls. Why does he not try to pacify them by telling them that all is well? Because, as the particular Captain I have quoted above, remarked, he knows 'em. He is quite aware of the fact that it is their inheritance of sea fear which is responsible for their mood. No words of his could overcome it. It must run its course like measles or whooping cough, maladies that are better out than in. He is perfectly serene; he knows that nervous passengers are inevitable. They do not amuse him, but they do not annoy him. Nor do they interfere in the least with his healthy and prodigious appetite. The time to be really fearful would occur when the Captain sat at table unable to eat. Then one might feel that things had indeed "come to a pretty pass." But the un-hungry Captain never happens. His digestion is always excellent; he is, moreover, a *connoisseur*. If you listen to the advice of the Captain at table, you will learn not how to dominate a ship, but how to steer your digestive apparatus along the road that leads to peace. The Captain loves the good things of life.

Stewards cater to nervous passengers in the way they think best for the evolution of tips. Sometimes it is advisable to reassure the timid ones by absolutely certifying the ship's sterling powers of

endurance. The steward will declare unblushingly that there is no other ship on the ocean as steady as this. There is no other vessel that rides the waves as she does. Why, she was built for wave-riding.

"Take some of them five-day boats," he will say contemptuously, "they would be standing on their 'eads in this weather. And the vibration! It is something terrible. This ship takes its time, to be sure, but it's as gentle as a lamb. This would be bad weather for a good many boats, but we can stand it. *We* are built for it. The racers are not constructed for the comfort of passengers. No, ma'am. If I had my way, I'd never cross on any other boat but this."

This same steward may see a tip in another direction from the other brand of nervous passenger. He will tell a somewhat different story in his artless way.

"I don't blame you for feeling nervous," he will say. "It is terrific weather. The first officer was just telling me that this is the worst gale he has ever experienced. Everybody is ill. Why, the stewardesses themselves can scarcely do their work. It is dreadful; it really is. There's no danger—not a bit. You can be sure of that, but it is a bad trip. You will be able to tell your friends that you had the roughest crossing in years."

The steward who understands the idiosyncrasies



of the nervous passenger usually comes out very well when the tips are distributed. He never laughs at the timid ones; that would nip his hopes in the bud. He brings a certain artistic sympathy into play, and uses it for all it is worth. The nervous passenger feels confidence in him; rings

for him perpetually just to listen to his consoling words, and the steward never loses his temper.

Sometimes you may hear the stewards and stewardesses discussing the various cranks confided to them, and enjoying many hearty laughs. It is just as well that the cranks themselves never hear this.

The ship's servants seem to prefer bad weather. It brings out all their human traits. Love's labour is lost when the sun shines. When it refuses to shine, and the Atlantic is peevish, love's labour looks longingly at a happy goal—which is surely a very human trait.

On the modern liner the object is to do away with the idea of the sea as much as possible, and to imitate the notion of a big hotel. The decks are carefully enclosed, so that not a breeze blows over them.

Sometimes they have glass windows, and you can sit in your steamer chair and almost forget that you are on board. There are corners that might almost be called "cosy," where the zephyrs never reach—gloomy corners that the nervous ones love. Everything in ocean travel tends nowadays to the elimination of the rôle formerly played by the ocean, which was once the "star," and is gradually being pushed down to the position of a



"supe." Those that love the sea repine at this, but the intention is to rout our inherited sea horror. The band on board labours with that object in view. Perhaps it routs the sea horror, but it conjures up another—a rag-time horror which is much worse.

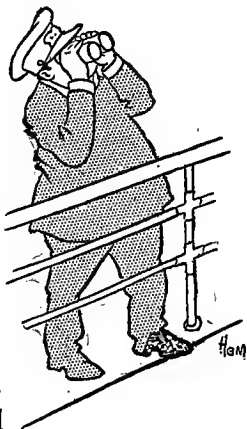
Nervous passengers look more cheerful when they listen to the strains of "popular" music on deck and in the dining saloon. Those who are not nervous almost wish that they were. The band is a desperate remedy, and a cruel one. It suggests Coney Island in a petulant mood, and timid people cannot think of their fears as they listen to its solacing land grind. It is so cheerful—so persecutingly cheerful. The band starts its atrocious consolation as the ship sails. At that time it means well, for

its purpose is to offset the conspicuous miseries of the accentuated farewell. It resumes its work at dinner; it plays for an hour on deck each morning. (Please note that I do not say *how* it plays, or *what* it plays.) And it is to be presumed that it inspires confidence in the many—and other things in the few. Possibly the band would play if the ship were sinking. I have never questioned the “musicians,” but I am convinced that their orders are to play until the very last passenger is submerged—and I think that if I were the last passenger I should hurry up and get submerged as quickly as possible. The band would be an incentive.

The effect of music is of course unquestioned. The effect is therapeutic. Perhaps it does lessen the nervous fears of the many at the expense of the mental serenity of the few. One doesn't seem to be on board ship when the band plays. One seems to be—well, never mind; 'tis best not to be too explicit. Music hath charms—when it is music. Timid ones, listening to the ship's band that plays the very airs one is running away from, think of the warm security, or alleged security, of a theatre, and feel that they are there. The sea horror is pounded out of them temporarily. The music at dinner robs the Atlantic of its “qualities” and substitutes those of Forty-second Street. Even the English liners are beginning to annex the hard-working band. Soon there will be no escape from it except on a freight boat.

Possibly freight boats will take to bands for nervous sailors.

The band makes you think that you are on a picnic. It is a lovely thought, but it palls. A picnic every day for seven days would weary the most ardent picnic lover. But nervous passengers are satisfied. The flavour of the ocean trip is defrauded of its piquancy, and they fear that piquancy. They ask for the cosy joys of land, as they traverse the waste of waters. Nervous passengers would like to gaze from the deck of a steamer upon sky-scrapers, and dry-goods stores, and palatial mansions, in mid-Atlantic. They are fractious because this seems to be impossible at present. Steamship companies will probably cater to this pronounced need later on. The ship might be surrounded by canvas on which realistic pictures of land's finest features could be painted. It may yet come to pass that we cross the ocean without seeing as much as a cup full of sea water. That would be so delightful, wouldn't it? The nervous passenger is the victim of an idea only. Facts prove that he is safer on an ocean steamer than he is on a fast-flying train, but he is obsessed by his inheritance, and facts are powerless to comfort him. Nor



is he at all anxious to be comforted. He feels that he is jeopardising his life to some extent; he has some inkling of heroism in the act, and he talks of that lethargic week of rest and relaxation and healthy deck life as though it were an ordeal through which cruel fate had propelled him. The fast steamer is his friend. One can cross in four days now, he will tell you joyously; soon that time will be reduced to three days. He wonders if there will ever be a pneumatic tube through which we can be shot with exquisite rapidity. The pneumatic tube for him any day!

The nervous passenger is a curious creature, amusing to begin with, but somewhat fatiguing as a steady pastime. He is unmistakable. He is fussy and irritable; he is "not himself," he will tell you. He cannot help it, he is always that way on the ocean. He may even be an experienced traveller; the nervous traveller is not invariably the person who is making his first trip across. That may sound strange, but it is true. Sometimes he impresses you in spite of yourself, and drags from your subconsciousness your own inheritance.

He has heard the stewards whispering; he has seen the Captain looking extremely serious; he was awake when the engines stopped suddenly in the night; he noticed certain ominous creakings in his stateroom; he has observed the sailors apparently getting the life-boats ready, and he feels it his duty

just to put you on your guard. And you laugh mirthlessly, and admit to yourself that you do feel a bit uncomfortable. You ask him to tell you all he knows, and to conceal nothing, which he is quite willing to do. You pity the other passengers, unconscious of anything unusual happening. If you need company you tell them, and induce them to join the merry, nervous throng, which is easy. The sea horror is always there, waiting to be invited out.

The very best thing to do with the nervous passenger is to find a mate for him, and leave them together in happy unhappiness; to avoid them conscientiously, as though they had something catching, which they assuredly have.

XI

THE CONCERT



SEE that long and serried array of mute and motionless figures, swathed in mummy-clothes, and looking like the effigies of the Kings and Queens on the tombs in Westminster Abbey or the dessicated ghosts in the Egyptian room of the British Museum? Well, they are passengers who are not feeling happy. But there will be a great resurrec-

tion of these mummies towards the end of the trip. They will arise, and they will cast off their mummy-clothes. They will sing, and they will recite, and they will play the piano, and the banjo, the violin, and other instruments of torture. They will take part in the Atlantic Ocean's sublime relaxation—the ship's concert.

It is quite possible to escape the ship's concert,

but it is not at all probable. Do not buoy yourselves up with false hopes. Do not pin your faith to the continuance of rough weather. Do not reason that because most of the women look as though they cannot sing—they will not sing. For they will. Those who can sing the least will sing the most. The recuperative forces of the ocean are far-reaching. The ocean is also a potent discoverer of "talent." It converts the most inoffensive and diffident of men, as well as the most guileless and ingenuous of women, into unabashed and virulent "entertainers."

There is always on board ship some hustler, upon whose hands time hangs heavily, and who is willing to "arrange" a concert. He secures the Captain's permission. The Captain is a wise man in his generation. He will always permit a concert, but he will not always attend it. He will discover on the eventful night that he is needed on the bridge, or that duty compels him to work in his room. One admires the Captain; one envies him, as well.

It is the hustler's pleasant duty to collect "talent." He is a very officious person, and he loves the work. He pretends that it is most distasteful to him, and that he is actuated by purest motives of charity. My opinion is that he has elected himself to this job, a week before sailing, and that it is his great chance for becoming temporarily "prominent." He invokes charity as his excuse. The proceeds of the concert will go to the orphans of seamen. No people on

earth seem to have as many orphans as seamen. Liverpool must be entirely populated by orphans. For twenty years I have had Liverpool orphans foisted upon me. Far be it from me to indulge in levity at the expense of unfortunate children, but one never hears of any decrease in the ranks of the orphans.

Boatloads of people sing for them, dance for them, recite for them, whistle for them, and read for them. Still, they are there next time—just as forlorn and miserable. You never hear that the orphans are doing nicely, that they are able to sit up and take nourishment, or are as well as can be expected. You never hear anything at all. The concert takes place. There could be no concert if there were no orphans. Nobody would dare to offer such an entertainment for mere pleasure! It is like the charity bazaar, in which you see more bazaar than charity.

The hustler comes up to you as you are resting in your steamer-chair and tells you that there is to be a concert on board for the benefit of the Liverpool orphans. (Sometimes you hear of Staten Island orphans.) Will you take part in the entertainment? You murmur a few words of protest—for this is so sudden—and regret that you possess no available talent. Oh, yes, he says, surely you sing? You tell him that you have never sung a note in your life. He is politely incredulous. In the

name of charity, he insinuates that you are telling a whopper.

"I don't suppose for a moment that you are a Caruso," he says rather nastily, "but I daresay that you could sing an ordinary song for us—'Let Me Like a Soldier Fall,' or 'Drink To Me Only With Thine Eyes.' Everybody sings those songs."

You get rather huffy, and tell your persecutor that you do not know one note from another. He seems to think that positive proof that you sing. He looks at you somewhat pitifully, and begs you to remember the noble men who have willingly lost their lives for your comfort. It is for their orphans that he asks you to sing. Then you say that it is just because you are so grateful to these men that you refuse to injure their helpless orphans by maiming them with your voice.

"A little piano-forte solo?" he suggests, not to be put down by clamour.

He is very indignant when you fight shy of this. Once when you were a laughing lad you used to play "Lilla's Lady," "Hay-



dn's Hymn to the Emperor," and "The Swiss Boy," but nobody induced you to continue. In fact, you have mercifully forgotten even those chaste melodies.

"It's too bad," he says testily. "If everybody is as apathetic as you are, we shall have no concert. The Captain particularly begged me to organise this entertainment" (he had particularly begged the Captain to allow him to organise it), "and I hate to be worsted. Well, if you won't sing or play for us, you can at least make an address—a good stirring, eloquent address."

"What about?" you murmur, with sinking heart.

"Oh, the Liverpool orphans," he says. "Poor little things!"

Now, the Liverpool orphans cannot be "little things." I have known them for twenty years, and even orphans grow in twenty years. They must be big, and married, with orphans of their own, by this time. I mention this. He says I am unfeeling, flippant, heartless, and he is not angry, but grieved. With some sort of compunction—I know not why—I volunteer to go round with him, and see if I can help him in any way with the others. Let me describe a typical talent-hunt with the hustler.

The ship has "got wind" of the contemplated concert, and the figures on the steamer-chairs, that look like the Kings and Queens on the tombs of

Westminster Abbey, are greatly interested. They move to the occasion—not being strong enough to rise. Many of the passengers cherish a very emphatic desire to be asked to “do something” for the concert. As a matter of fact, there is never any difficulty in organising the concert. “Talent” lurks in the most unexpected places, and talent is inclined to assert itself.

We approach the inevitable New England spinster, who sees us coming, and straightens herself up to meet us. She is very thin, and yellow, and nasal. Her face is enveloped in a gauze veil, tightly stretched, and she is always twitching her upper lip, to free it from the embracing gauze—not the sort of embrace that appeals to her.

She simpers a little as she reluctantly informs us that she *can* do something for us, though she *despises* publicity. She is not quite sure about her voice on the ocean (I am—both on the ocean and off), but she can *try*. And she can practise in the saloon between now and the concert day. She would like to sing, “Oh, That We Two Were Maying,” but of course—with some more simper—she will need somebody to “may” with. She cannot “may” alone. Also, she would prefer to “may” with a gentleman. Can we find one for her? If so, she will consent to appear.

It will be no easy matter unearthing a “gentleman” willing to “may” with this particular damsel.

In fact, I refuse at first to be party to any such mean trick. But there is a youth with an enormous voice who has been singing in the saloon ever since we left port—and who must have come on board for the express purpose of singing. We corner him, and



ask him if he knows "Oh, That We Two Were Maying." Of course he does. He has known it for years. It is very pretty, is it not? There is a rhythm to it that is exquisite. Sung in the gloaming,

it is delicious. Have we ever heard it sung in the gloaming?

I whisper to the hustler, that, after all, it is rather "low down" to hurl the New England spinster at this lad. He has never done us any harm. But the hustler says "Liverpool orphans" and I am instantly crushed. So be it.

"There's a very charming young lady on board—from Massachusetts," says the hustler, "and she sings 'Oh, That We Two Were Maying'—or will do so, if you will sing it with her. Will you? It is for the benefit of the Liverpool orphans, you know."

I long to cry "Pause!" and give the poor wretch a chance, but the hustler digs me in the ribs, and I am silenced. The singer's name is inscribed. He



“They sang, ‘Oh, that we two were maying’ ”

will chant "Oh, That We Two Were Maying" with the New England spinster. He will get his!

An English matron who wears ear-rings, a necklace, bangles, a locket, rings and other jewels of marked insincerity, tells us that she sings "Dear Heart," "In Sweet September," and "Beauty's Eyes." She has a large repertoire of Hope Temple, and Tosti. Do we know Tosti's "Good-Bye"? The hustler doesn't, and I wonder how the hustler has escaped. Tosti has said more good-byes than Patti.



The hustler appears to have an emphatic preference for coon songs. He is an American from Grand Rapids, Mich., and is "travelling for furniture." The English matron, however, turns up her nose at the mere mention of coon songs. She will not pander to such a low taste. On board ship the Englishwomen all sing sentimental ballads of funereal import—ballads that deal with violets

wreathed on their graves, and with lost loves laid to rest 'neath the daffodils in the village churchyard. The American women warble rag-time, and have a splendid assortment of Honolulu Susies, and Mandies, and Daisies, and Anastasia Browns to offer. In the British Isles you despise ballads, and clamour for coon songs; in the United States, you loathe coon songs, and hanker for ballads; on board ship, you get both, and are still not happy.

There is a college professor on the ship, and the hustler tells me that a "serious" reading, or something of that sort, would be very valuable. The professor is sitting, poring over a book, as we march up to him. He has many whiskers, and much dignity, but the hustler has no qualms at all. He prides himself on his "push"; most travellers do. What we call "cheek" they label "push." The professor listens to our tale of woe; we rush him into the midst of the Liverpool orphans. The concert is now "assuming gigantic proportions," according to the hustler. It will be a stupendous thing. It will be something to remember for the rest of our lives. All who have taken part in it will love to recall that fact in future years. And the Liverpool orphans will fatten on it—if they are not already so fat that increased flesh would end their earthly career.

"Well," says the professor, in staccato deliberation, "if I can help you, of course, I shall be delighted. Let me see"—reflectively—"if you like,

I could give you a nice little chat about 'The Rubáiyát' of Omar Khayyám, with selections——"

"The *what?*" cries the hustler, apparently paralysed.

The professor repeats it. "I have my own ideas about Omar Khayyám," he says, "and I fancy I could make it light and interesting. It is a charm-



ing subject. Of course, I do not insist. Still, I think that perhaps my fellow-passengers will enjoy Omar Khayyám."

"Who *is* he?" queries the hustler, perplexed. Then turning to me: "Have *you* ever heard of him?"

It is mean of me, but I cannot help it; it is contemptible and unworthy, but I decide that no light shall be shed upon the mystery of Omar Khayyám, by me. So I look puzzled, and a trifle suspicious, and—the professor looks amazed, as well he might.

"Of course, if you say it's all right, Professor," continues the hustler dejectedly, "it must be. I take it that you mean to give us a recitation. One thing I'll ask you. You must excuse me. I suppose that this Homer What's-his-name is—er—moral—the sort of thing that is fit for ladies? Oh"—as the professor makes a motion expressive of rising indignation—"for myself, I don't care. For this gentleman"—pointing to me—"I don't care. But we have our wives, and daughters, and mothers on board, and we cannot take too many precautions. Still, if you assure me, Professor——"

The professor by this time has gauged the literary measure of the hustler. He is amused, but he is also annoyed. He resumes his book with quiet dignity, remarks that he is sorry he is too busy to take part in the concert, hopes all sorts of pleasing results for the Liverpool orphans, and dismisses us!

"I put my foot in it that time," says the hustler, "but I can't help it. Suppose that Homer thing turned out to be some improper, problem affair—like a good many modern plays! Who would be responsible? Why, I. He seems like a sober chap, but I cannot announce anything I do not understand. If he had suggested 'The Face on the Bar-room Floor,' or 'Poker Flat,' or something of that sort! I am sorry to have hurt his feelings, but I am convinced that I did the right thing."

"So there's to be a concert," exclaims a heavily-coated lady, interrupting us. "I thought I'd tell you that if you are looking for talent my little girl would be glad to oblige. She is only eight years old, but she plays a Clementi sonatina and 'Valse Favourite' beautifully. Some say that she is quite a prodigy, but I won't go as far as that. Come here, Joy, and tell the gentlemen what you can do."

Joy looks much more like Woe. She is one of those terrible, ship-board children who have their hair cut "Buster Brown," wear blue serge, and quarrel all day long with



their contemporaries. Joy says she hasn't practised, and has forgotten how to play. To which mommer replies that she is a naughty girl. Thereupon, Joy insists that Signor Jenkins, her instructor in New York, has told her not to play before people. Mommer is furious. She informs us that she pays ten dollars a lesson to Signor Jenkins, and that Joy is going to be a wonder. She is particularly anxious for the Captain to hear her. Joy is in tears by this time. Mommer threatens her with instant bed, and no candies for six months. The scene has become intensely emotional, and we drift away.

Another fond parent, of the feminine persuasion, buttonholes us. She, too, has a sweet little daughter who dances exquisitely. For years she has been to "dancing school" in all its enormities, and it is quite likely that she will eventually become a professional. "Her father is dead against it," declares the matron. "He sulks when it is mentioned. But what is one to do with such talent? A pity to let it go to waste! So I tell Pa not to be foolish, and to let Malvina go ahead. She may be able to support us in luxury—he! he! he!—in our old age."

The hustler is much interested. A dance will vary the monotony of the bill, the star features of which, at present, seem to be "Oh, That We Two Were Maying," and some English ballads.

"The last time our Malvina danced," continues mommer, "was at Mr. Callahan's Dancing School

in One-Hundred-and-Twenty-Fifth Street, and may be she didn't go big! She did one of them 'Salome' dances, imitating Gertrude Hoffman and Eva Tanguay. My! She didn't do a thing to them!"

The hustler straightens himself up. "No 'Salome' dances for mine," he says. "They would object to that sort of thing here. It may be all right in New York, where people are sensational and frivolous, but on board an ocean-liner—perhaps little Malvina will do some other dance for us."

Mommer is much chagrined. She has brought Malvina's "Salome" costume with her on board, knowing that there would be a concert, and a chance for the sweet little thing to display her marvellous gifts. Mommer is quite upset. Still, Malvina has another dance, a most elaborate and complicated affair, that it took her months to acquire. She made a great hit in it at Mr. Callahan's Carnival. It is much finer than any of the work of Isadora Duncan, though of the same trend.

The hustler is happy. He proposes to book Malvina.

"The concert will take place in the saloon?" queries mommer. "That is most important."

"It certainly will," replies the hustler imperiously, as though the ship were his.

"It will be necessary to have all the tables and chairs removed," asserts Malvina's parent. "The child will need all the space she can get, and more."

Her pirouettes are astonishing. Unless you promise that every chair and table shall be taken away, I cannot consent to let my Malvina appear. She might injure herself."

The hustler laughs rather rudely. "Why, Madame," he says, "all those tables and chairs are screwed down. They can't be moved. It would be utterly impossible."

"Nonsense!" exclaims the matron heatedly. "In half an hour the sailors could unscrew every bit of furniture in the dining-room. It is an occasion, a great occasion, and the Captain will give you every facility. He always does. Imagine my Malvina doing a classical dance dodging chairs and tables. Well, I guess not!"

"The lady is quite right," I say maliciously to the hustler. "I feel sure that the Captain will agree to the clearance of the saloon. He has a big crew, idling their time away—loafing, smoking, and talking. He will be glad of the chance to set them to work. They have done nothing since they left port. It would be a pity to risk little Malvina's discomfiture."

The hustler glares at me stonily. He reckons on my aid, and I have deserted him. He is alone, with Malvina's mommer, figuratively speaking. The situation is unpleasant.

"I will see the Captain, if you prefer it," says the lady. "He is always very nice to me. My brother-

in-law's cousin crossed with him last trip, and we have grown very friendly. I'll ask him about removing the chairs and tables, and I'll let you know what he says."

So the hustler erases Malvina's name from the galaxy of talent, and we pursue our way, sadder and wiser men. There is nothing like a conflict with talent, in mid-Atlantic, to chill the enthusiasm of the too-enthusiastic. After this, we visit many people, all freighted with heaven-bestowed gifts. A young man, who has "ribbon department" all over him, promises to oblige us with a reading from Charles Dickens. It will be from "Oliver Twist" or "Nicholas Nickleby." He *used* to read from "The Pickwick Papers," but he felt that such humour was too trivial. He would give us the scene between Bill and Nancy Sykes, or the Death of Smike. The hustler would have preferred something jollier, he says, but he is satisfied. Beggars cannot be choosers.

An anæmic-looking curate, with a most blotchy face, volunteers "The Charge of the Light Brigade," which even the hustler has heard before. His face brightens as he discovers this literary resting-place for the sole of his foot. He knows "The Charge of the Light Brigade" as "the thing they



always recite at concerts." It gladdens his heart. No concert, on board ship, is worthy of its name and its reputation without "The Charge of the Light Brigade."

The banjo-soloist flourishes in mid-Atlantic. Usually the most imposing looking persons on the steamer are banjo-soloists. You would scarcely have dared to suspect them of it. Their appearance would suggest that their specialty might be some beautiful anthem work on the organ, or perhaps a chaste dalliance with the violincello. Not at all; they are banjo-soloists. They glory in it. Their banjos are on board pining to be twanged. They have a repertoire of awe-inspiring rag-time. All they need is an accompanist. We have no trouble in securing banjo solos. We could fill an entire programme with them. They are the musical weeds of the ocean steamship's concert, and grow apace.

The work of organising the ship's concert never varies. Nor does the ship's concert. In the above sketch of the typical quest for steamship entertainment I have omitted the search for a chairman, which is very edifying. It seems cruel to class a chairman among "talent." The hustler endeavours to pounce upon somebody of importance for this office, and has considerable difficulty, for there are a great many people who *think* that they are of importance. There are generally a number of gentlemen passenger-listed as "Colonel," or "General," or

"Honourable." Then there is a sprinkling of "Doctors"—a somewhat abused title adopted by chiropodists, manicurists, dentists, and tonsorial artists.

"Colonel," however, is always impressive, and the hustler easily gets one, whom he instructs in his duties. He must make a few remarks of a pathetic nature, eulogising the Liverpool orphans, and bringing home the charity to the hearts of the passengers. Then he must introduce the various artists, and utter a few pungent suggestions about the collection. Sometimes the "Colonel" happens to be one of those prosy old things who, once let loose, decline all fastenings. I have known the "Colonel" to speak for so long, that we thought we should sight Sandy Hook before he had finished. We were unable to choke him off. We coughed. We jingled coins. We were unduly obstreperous. But he closed his "few remarks" only when his voice gave out.

The "introductions" are not the least amusing part of the ship's concert. The chairman feels inclined to rhapsodise, sometimes unduly.

"We shall now listen to that delightful, to that world-famous, to that ever-moving duet, 'Oh, That We Two Were Maying,'" he says eloquently; "Miss Snooks of Massachusetts, and Mr. Pumstock of Cohoes, who will interpret this lovely song, are, as I am sure you will recognise when you have heard them, artists of exceptional ability. It will be a great

privilege to listen to them. I beg to introduce you to Miss Snooks and Mr. Pumstock."

After which we are usually in for it. Miss Snooks is nervous, and Mr. Pumstock isn't. The accompanist is uncertain, and miserable. Sometimes the ship lurches while Miss Snooks is in the very midst of her "maying," and Mr. Pumstock glares at her, as she spoils his best effort.

With "The Charge of the Light Brigade" the chairman is always at home. "This," he says, "the work of that mystic poet, the divine Tennyson, needs no comment. It speaks for itself. Its rhythm is one of its most beautiful features. Many of you have heard it before. Many of you may hear it again. It has lived, and it will live. I have much pleasure in introducing to you my young friend, Mr. Bore. If Tennyson were alive, I am sure that he would love to hear Mr. Bore recite his wonderful poem."

Tennyson—lucky poet—is not alive. We are. Some of us scarcely indulge in the sentiments that the chairman has anticipated. Mr. Bore is always the same, on any line. The Cunard version of "The Charge



of the Light Brigade " is quite identical with that of the American or Atlantic transport lines.

The artists all look very coy and self-conscious as they are reviewed by the chairman. It is a great moment in their lives. They probably save their programmes, and many years hence will tell proudly of the time "when I sang in public, my dear, and was spoken of as one of the finest artists of the day." They are always willing to give as many encores as they can crowd in. The encores resemble those that occur in New York at the "first night" production of a comic opera. If the audience happens to cough, back comes the artist, convinced that it is an encore. So it is on board ship. Every song produces more of its kind—no matter how exhausting the kind. The audience is invariably delighted. The women have donned their best bibs and tuckers, and the men, all combed and shining for the great event, wear a look of Sunday rest. They always wonder where the Captain is. I never do. I know. Captains have got to live their lives, which are not lives of art—steamship concert art. We hope to get into port some day, if the prolix old chairman will ever stop talking—and so there is no use wondering where the Captain is. Possibly he is singing "Oh, That We Two Were Maying" with the purser.

The collection reminds one of church. Lovely girls pass plates around, and the passengers drop in their coins—doing it quickly, so that the coins shall

immediately mingle with the contents of the plate, and tell no tales! Nobody wants his right hand to know what his left hand has been doing—for the Liverpool orphans! When this weighty business has been transacted, there is a lull in the storm. The amateurs pause, anxious to know what their efforts have produced—the exact pecuniary value of, “Oh, That We Two Were Maying,” etcetera.

“Ladies and gentlemen,” says the chairman at last—his voice is grave and sonorous—“I have much pleasure in announcing that we have collected the splendid sum of \$43.22” (it is generally a sum that sounds like a dry-goods price—\$43.22 reduced from \$45) “and this sum will make many dear little orphans happy. It has been a most successful

and enjoyable concert. We shall never forget it. I should also like to say that Mrs. Thingamy, our generous friend from Chicago, who was not well enough to attend the concert, has just sent down a two-dollar bill. That makes our total \$45.22 — an excellent total.”

There is nearly al-



ways some Mrs. Thingamy whose generosity is advertised so pleasingly, and whose contribution receives the chairman's eulogy. We, who have popped in a secluded "quarter," feel duly impressed by the lavish and reckless amount vouchsafed by Mrs. Thingamy. But her love for the Liverpool orphans is well known. She has mentioned it to many people on deck. She is also a wise woman, for she is never well enough to appear at the concert. Her love for the Liverpool orphans is perhaps not strong enough to submit to that test.

After the concert there is a cold collation. The ship "treats." There is lemonade, and cake, and sandwiches, and other delicacies of the church-sociable brand. We all chat with the artists, and fondly congratulate them. Airy felicitations of this ilk are hard:

"Really, it was a most delightfully arranged affair!"

"That song of yours, Miss Snooks, was a gem. Even on board ship one could appreciate the quality of your voice. Has Hammerstein heard you?"

"How splendidly you read Smike's death from 'Nicholas Nickleby,' Mr. Jones. You seemed to *feel* it all. What an art!"

"You carried us away with your 'Charge of the Light Brigade,' Mr. Bore. What a sweet thing it is when *properly* recited. Of course it *can* be ruined!"

"Honestly, we wept at your song, 'Take Me

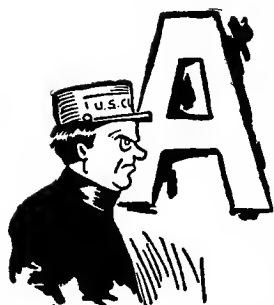
Home To Mother,' and 'Let Me Die,' Miss Green. It was so appealing, and—oh, your voice is perfect."

"Mrs. Smith, that child of yours is a genius. It will stamp itself upon the age. I have never heard 'The Maiden's Prayer' more astoundingly executed!"

And then we go to bed, having done our duty by the Liverpool orphans. The hustler says that he can sympathise with any impresario. Hammerstein can have his Manhattan Opera House. Still, he feels highly gratified at the results of the concert. It was entirely due to the artists. No, he refuses to take the slightest credit to himself.

XII

THE CUSTOM HOUSE



N extraordinary, an apparently inexplicable change comes o'er the spirit of the home-steering American as the pure ozone of the atmosphere becomes faintly charged with the exhilarating flavour of the Stars and Stripes. It looms like a cloud, at first no bigger than a man's hand, and gradually assumes portentous shape. The careless observer believes that the end of a merry holiday has cast its shadow before; that the prospect of "settling down"—always a grim and an unlovely proceeding—is the wet-blanket that appears to dampen the energies of all passengers, especially those that are feminine. The careless observer is of course—careless. Surely the instincts of the most elementary patriotism would prevent these sulky and disagreeable moods. I assume invariably that every good American is bubbling with ebullient joy at the mere idea of once more treading a soil that is free from the myths of European tradition. Every good American declares, and asserts triumphantly, that this is indeed

the case. Who am I to doubt such asseverations? People who have protested steadily all the way over, at food, lodging, inhabitants, customs, and governments studied abroad, must be overjoyed that their ordeal is past. I insist upon believing that they *are* overjoyed, and that no inducement would take them abroad again—until the next time.

This extraordinary, this apparently inexplicable change that comes o'er their spirits slowly, yet crushingly, what is it? This subtle, insidious dread that seems to stamp all vivacity from the decks of the ship, what does it signify, and why does it signify it? One cannot overlook it. It is responsible for curious contradictions and singular inconsistencies in the behaviour of perfectly practical people. Let us study dispassionately a few instances.

The delightful young woman who has amused everybody by her entertaining descriptions of the shops in London, and Paris, and Vienna is almost unrecognisable as we near Sandy Hook. She has told us of the funny experiences she had with dress-makers and milliners. She has inveighed against the costliness of European goods, and has insistently told us that she is returning home in that impecunious condition sometimes called "stony." She has been most chatty and communicative, and we have laughed heartily at her quaint observations.

The change that comes o'er her is astonishing. It is inconceivable. She gloomily announces that

though she diligently studied shopping methods abroad, she never bought a thing! They tried to persuade her to invest her good money in dresses and hats, but she positively declined. Why should she buy abroad? Everybody knows that American products are infinitely superior. She seems to have developed very suddenly an undying hatred for all European finery, and at the same time to have changed from a light-hearted cosmopolitan to a melancholy patriot.

The matron who has been intensely proud of the souvenirs she has collected in foreign cities, and who



has assiduously led you to believe that her expenditures were enormous, loses all the gay bravado of her humour as the chart indicates a proximity to Sandy Hook. She admits that her purchases were foolish trifles, scarcely worth padding her trunk with, and she goes so far as to specify that her entire outlay was "under a hundred dollars." The passengers are incredulous. The lady has worn conspicuously splendid chains of light pink corals from Venice, and beautiful specimens of silver filigree from Genoa. The value of these things that, at the Lizard, ran into the thousands of dollars, suddenly shrink, in the vicinity of Sandy Hook, to "under a hundred dollars." There is a slump, compared with which the fluctuations of Wall Street are mere trifles.

The gay young man who has worn two different suits of clothes every day, and who has been very confiding on the subject of the durability of English cloth, suddenly appears garbed in unmistakable New York. His naughty, unpatriotic sentiments have vanished—melted into thin air. He says that New York tailors are good enough for him. He has been all over the world, and has never discovered any sartorial artists who can cut clothes as they cut them in New York. Many people imagine that he buys his clothes abroad. It is ridiculous. They simply do not understand how to build clothes in Europe. Perhaps London cloth lasts longer. Just

perhaps. But New York is the greatest city in the universe for clothes that are elegant and personal. Abroad, clothes are impersonal. The gay young man seems nervous and "not himself."

The pretty girl who attracted so much attention at the concert by the exquisite evening gown that she wore—a gown that had "Paris" marked all over it—and who told all enquirers that she had several others even nicer in the hold of the ship, wears the look of the hunted antelope as the steamer nears her destination. She is clad in a simple shirt-waist and skirt, and she appears at dinner in one of those pleasant little American blouses that one sees in New York marked "four ninety-eight, reduced from six-fifty." She is from Scranton, Pa., and she tells everybody what splendid dressmakers they have in Scranton, Pa. Honestly, it would have been ludicrous for her to buy anything in Paris and Vienna. She saw nothing there to compare with the "creations" she could always find in Scranton, Pa.

The trusting and loquacious individual in the smokeroom who, on cold days, has worn a fur overcoat that nobody but European royalty or American bad actors would dare to wear, and who has thoughtlessly displayed the label inside, under your very eyes, becomes very pensive as the trip nears its end. He asks you pathetically if you think he ought to "declare"—a pair of shoes he bought in Europe.

"You see, I was there for four months," he says

diffidently, "and shoes *do* wear out. I tramped about a good deal, and finally bought some new shoes. Nothing else whatsoever. Now, is it necessary to declare them? Of course, I am perfectly willing to pay duty on them."

He has a hunted look in his eyes. The fur overcoat is lying across the seat, and the label, from force of habit, is ostentatiously displayed. You solemnly advise him to declare his new shoes. After all, it is the best policy to live up to rules and regulations. He thanks you dejectedly, and agrees with you. He will declare the shoes at a sovereign. They really cost a trifle less than a sovereign.



The "good fellow" who has been the "life and soul" of the trip, and whose exuberant moods have made him immensely popular, appears to be one of those uncanny people freighted with a guilty secret. He has been joviality personified all the way over; his ringing laughter was infectious; his humorous sallies were sidesplitting. But as the hustle and bustle that precede arrival are noted, he sits and mopes. He button-holes pas-

sengers, and asks them leading questions about their purchases abroad. He is exceedingly interested in what they bought. There is a sinister look in his eyes as he awaits their answers. His manner suggests that he has "skipped" his hotel bill, or something worse. He is morose, and occasionally cynical. He gives vent to utterances that are distressingly unpatrician.

Says he: "What I don't like about this business of getting back is the Custom House treatment. They force you to declare your purchases abroad, and then go through your trunks just the same. You make an oath and they don't believe it. In no other country are you treated so discourteously."

Of course this is horrible. You hate to listen to it. Sometimes your blood runs cold as you hear perfectly good Americans saying such odious things about an institution that is almost honoured by tradition. So many of them do it. They do it altruistically, for they have never made any purchases that could possibly inconvenience *them*. They affect to regard the Custom House as a very trying ordeal—goodness knows why. The only things they are bringing back with them that they did not take over are such articles as tooth-brushes, face-powder, collar-buttons, shoe-laces, and very plain handkerchiefs without any incriminating lace on them! Yet these people attack a benevolent scheme most outrageously.

In fact, the extraordinary, the apparently inexplicable change that comes o'er the spirit of the home-steering American is due to the Custom House. There is no need to make any further mystery about it. It is that, and it is nothing more. On land good Americans rather admire the Custom House. The greatness of the country is due to the Custom House. The splendidly conceived idea of preventing thoughtless citizens from frittering away money, earned in America, on rapacious foreigners, has made the country what it is. But at sea they are not nearly as enthusiastic, or if they are, they keep their enthusiasm to themselves, as a sentiment too sacred to be expressed in vulgar joy. Good Americans do not look forward to the Custom House, as of course they should do. They never rejoice at the idea of proving to extremely pleasant officials the sheer fact of their undying patriotism. When you meet "politicians" on the ocean steamer, you find them just as lacking in proper affection for that benign institution as any of the non-politicians. Yet these men are stern patriots. They tell you so at dinners and meetings, in outbursts of irrepressible eloquence.

Most people are very fractious the day before they land. They whisper a good deal. Occasionally they seem to start when a passenger whom they have not noticed before, approaches them. They look anxious and moody, haggard with secret cares.

They have evidently drained the cup of joy to its dregs, and the dregs are bitter. They rarely talk about the good time that is awaiting them at home, for preceding that possible good time there is the Custom House rearing itself before their mental vision. They look upon the Custom House as a sort of stone wall through which they must butt their heads to home and liberty.



Passengers are seldom frank and trusting. Your very best friend never tells you till weeks after that she had seventeen real lace handkerchiefs and twelve pairs of gloves concealed about her ingenuous person. You feel rather hurt at this lack of candour, especially as you have boldly admitted to her that you were declaring three boxes of cigarettes. You feel rather pleased, however, that you did not admit six boxes of cigars that somehow or other you quite forgot to declare.

On one occasion, a lady who had sat at our table all the way over, and whom we had grown to look upon as the embodiment of fragrant truth, almost shattered my belief in the veracity of human nature. She showed us a list of all the purchases she was declaring. It was in black and white and figures. It was full of detail. She had not forgotten to set down a few feathers, some inexpensive dress trimmings, and—if I may be allowed to say it—half a

dozen pairs of simple, unassuming lisle-thread stockings. Honesty looked from her eyes. *She* really seemed to love the Custom House. She said that she thought it was fun, and a capital field for the study of human nature.

On the dock I noticed that she walked about a good deal, and seemed unwilling to sit down. We advised her to sit on her trunk, as it was dreadful to see her prowling about, tiring herself out. She said, rather nervously, that she had been sitting for a week, and that it was good to walk. Nothing would induce her to take a seat. The mere idea seemed repulsive. We met her outside the dock, after the examination, as she was stepping into a carriage. She was rather merry.

"Now," she said, "I'm going to sit down, *if* I can. I say *if* I can, because I have twenty yards of heavy brocaded silk wound around me. Under these circumstances, you will realise that it is not easy to rest. You nearly gave the show away with your ridiculous politeness. It is a wonder that you did not notice how stout I had grown. As soon as I get home, I shall—bant."

This sort of thing destroys one's faith in human nature. But it is just as well not to have too much faith in that sort of nature—at the Custom House.

"All hope abandon, ye who enter here."

The end of every trip to the fanciful observer is—Hell, or at least Purgatory. All those timid, fear-

riddled souls that cross the gang-plank of the liner to the ugly, cold and squalid dock, where they must stand, denuded of hypocrisy, cant, mendacity, and a criminal love for the wares of other climes, until they have atoned, or until their innocence is established, seem like lost ones. Their material joys are now forgotten in the horror of expiation. They have sinned, and they must pay the penalty. Avenging spirits will pry into the very innermost recesses—of their trunks! There can be no escape. The wages of sin is—the Custom House.

“All hope abandon, ye who enter here.”

At the Custom House all are equal. The haughty ones and the exclusive ones, the posers and the prattlers, the merry souls and the solemn souls, those who have amused you and those who have bored you—all are arraigned at that mighty bar. The man who brings into the United States nothing in the world but his tooth-brush must hold it up to the gaze of relentless officials. The lady who has sworn by her grandfather's beard—or anything they want her to swear by—that all her beautiful Paris gowns are pure and unadulterated New York, must prove it. She may have sewn a Siegel-Cooper lable on a Doucet confection. Of what will it avail her? Nothing. Her sin will be unveiled. This is her purgatory.

“All hope abandon, ye who enter here.”

But all hope is not abandoned. Staid yet eminent people suddenly acquire the actor's art. Some of

the very best acting done outside of a theatre—acting that is often on a par with the most excellent work seen inside a theatre—may be noticed on any dock after the arrival of a crowded steamer.

The dame who has snubbed everybody all the way over, and whose boast it is that she can never be amiable to people to whom she has not been properly introduced, acts the part of a delightfully gay and ingenuous young person to the Custom House inspector. She is shivering in her shoes at certain awful possibilities, but as she hands him her keys, you would never guess it. She is quite eager to present her keys. She appears to have taken a great fancy to the Custom House inspector and to ask one thing only: that he explore her trunks, and see what a good girl is she. As he possesses himself of the keys she talks to him in a careless but perfectly friendly way.

“I’m afraid that I’m not much of a sinner,” she says lightly. “You see, I cross so often that I’ve learned my lesson. Why, I declare, it was you who went over my trunks last year! Don’t you remember? You took a great deal of trouble, and you found—nothing. Surely, you remember? I told you about the theatres in Paris, and you seemed very interested.”

There may be a tremor in her voice, but she is really a very good actress—one of those highly-strung emotional actresses who are nevertheless ar-



"Appears to take a great fancy to the inspector"

tists in repression. Though her soul is racked, she hums an air. She walks away from the inspector and chats gracefully with an adjacent passenger whom she has snubbed during the trip. This is what stage people call "business." Good actresses often have "business" with supernumeraries, to whom they appear to be telling the secrets of their past. Yet she had one eye on the inspector all the time. It is a difficult part to play. She sees her gowns plucked from the trunk and cast upon the dock. She beholds all her cherished trifles rudely manipulated by an insensate man. Yet she smiles. Her part is to appear to be enjoying it all. Has actress ever been asked to simulate a more fiendish emotion?

Many women affect to regard the inspector as a sort of long-lost brother. As he is assigned to the task of investigating their earthly goods, they heave sighs of relief. The uninitiated might think that they had crossed the ocean just to meet this sweet, inspecting person. They seem so glad and so happy. They have nothing to conceal, noth-



ing to fear. They are quite sure that he must dislike his job very much, and they want to help him. They just yearn to help him; to make things easy for him, so that he can get home to his wife and children. Of course he has a wife and children. That is why he is so human and so charming. These are the women who are so "uppish" with menials, and so stand-off-ish with the average mortal. All is changed at the dock. They are overflowing with the milk of human kindness.

"I've travelled all over Europe," says the dowager, who has just handed her keys to the inspector, and who looks as though she would love to slay him. "I've been through the Customs of Germany, France, Italy, Hungary, and England, and I'm bound to say, that for real courtesy and innate chivalry New York beats them all. I have never had any trouble in New York."

She smiles a slow and tortured smile. The inspector is polite, but quite cold. He is not inclined to discuss the Customs of other countries; he is busy enough with those of his own. He holds no brief for chivalry. He is a man confronted with his duty, and he is there to do it. The joyous remarks of the dowager count for nothing at all. He discovers a gown that she has *not* declared. The poor lady can act no longer. Picturesque indignation, outraged delicacy, a wild and impassioned appeal to his better nature take the place of mere filigree frivolity.

"I have worn that dress for years," she says. "It is old. It was not really worth bringing back. I am going to give it to my cook, who can always use my cast-off clothes."

The inspector has no sense of humour, or if he has, his experiences with the vagaries of returning matrons have dulled it. The gown is *décolleté*, and it has a long, swishing train. Yet he does not derisively picture the cook in her kitchen inside the beautiful dress. He does not contemptuously ask if Mary Jane always peels potatoes in "full evening dress." The dowager rages. The chivalry of the New York Customs is routed for ever. Henceforth she will swear by Germany, France, Italy, Hungary, and England.

Efforts are made to engage the ruthless inspector in the distracting joys of tea-table talk. Anxious women tell him pleasant little stories. They narrate pungent anecdotes of the trip abroad, cutting out all allusions to their experiences in the European marts. They ask him many questions, and are extremely interested in the New York weather, the latest murder case, the newest play, and the most recent political developments. All the while he is churning up the contents of trunks. He is stirring up their good clothes as though they were soup. He is running his hands along the sides of the trunks; he is lifting up carefully arranged garments; he is unfastening everything that is fastened, and he is

performing the feats of a conjurer with innocent little molehills of which he makes mountains. The anxious women try to be light-hearted. It is up-hill work. The New Thought is as impotent as the good Old Thought to induce mental serenity and an unbudging poise in the Custom House.

The men are just as distraught—especially those men who have bought nothing but shoe-laces. One wonders why they are so dreadfully nervous about shoe-laces—but they are. Even if the shoe-laces were confiscated, one can obtain the article, at most reasonable rates, all over the United States. Yet their brows are furrowed; they are haggard and lank; they seem to wish themselves at the bottom of the sea—and all because of those silly little shoe-laces.

People sit for hours on that cold and clammy dock, waiting for their trunks to be fished up from the bowels of the ship. They look miserable until the trunks appear, and then, much more miserable. One would think that they would be glad to see faithful and long-tried boxes that have been hidden from them for a whole week in the hold of the ship. They want their trunks, of course, but they seem to hate the sight of them. They have lost all joy in their treasures. These appear to be full of Dead Sea fruit—which is probably dutiable.

At the dock you hate all the nice people with whom you have been so chummy all the way across,

nor have you any use for the passengers whom you have been most anxious to meet. Human nature, stripped of its "party manners," confronts you. Men and women who had been so light-hearted and so delightful for seven days are now facing stern realities. You can no longer lure them into polite conversation. Just try it. Go and ask the dowager whose silken underwear is being displayed to a gaping crowd if she prefers Guy de Maupassant to Balzac. Question the pretty girl who is vociferously declaring that certain brand-new gowns are brand-old, as to the latest thing in "two-steps." Ask the



apparently afflicted father, who has forgotten to smoke five hundred cigarettes on the trip, if he would declare "no trumps" with one ace and a guarded king. Endeavour to make polite conversation on classical topics with the college graduate, whose beautiful suit of London evening clothes is being criticised by a mirthless menial.

These people who have been so smiling and so convivial will glare at you. Life is real, life is earnest, and the Custom House is its goal. Especially if you are "all through," and ready to sally forth and enjoy New York, will they loathe you. They are selfish people. Instead of rejoicing at your emancipation, and throwing confetti at you as you march proudly from the dock, a free man and a righteous one, wearing the hall-mark of the Custom House on your suit case, they seem to be victims of the worst emotions—envy, jealousy, and irritating incredulity. Misery loves company. At the Custom House everybody who "gets through" is unwillingly parted with by those who have not "got through."

It is galling, of course. People who have been righted in the eyes of the Customs always look so fiendishly triumphant. They cannot conceal their joy, and make no effort to do so. In fact, one might almost accuse them of wilfully rubbing it in.

You sit wearily watching the inspector discover that a dozen new collars were bought abroad. He is quite right, for they were, and you are too tired to

contradict, when a bouncing young thing rushed up and says: "Still at it! We're all through. No trouble at all. I can't understand why people worry themselves so. Why, you'll be an hour yet. Our inspector was a perfect dear, but of course, *we* had nothing to declare."

How you despise that girl! You never want to meet the heartless, unsympathetic minx again. She is *so* lively, and you feel *so* depressed.

Or, your room-mate appears, and simply laughs at your plight. You have been very kind to that boy. You waited on him when he was ill, and you declined to unpack your valise so that he could have more room for his ridiculous clothes.

"I'm through!" he says exultantly. "The ordeal is over. As a matter of fact, it is no ordeal at all. The United States wants to protect itself. It is quite right. If unscrupulous people will smuggle, then they must expect—whatever they get. You seem to be having a hard time of it, old chap. Never mind. It will all be the same in a hundred years. So long! Awfully glad to have met you. Call me up sometime, if you *ever* get through."

He goes off whistling—the cub! To think that you have been a father to that boy, and that he leaves you without a qualm in the midst of all your collars! Certainly the Custom House brings out the worst traits in human nature. You never really know a man until you have seen him at the Custom House.

It is there that you meet human frailty, naked and unashamed.

The young woman with whom you have danced on deck, in sheer kindness of heart, because nobody else would dance with her—and she really had no idea of waltzing—is unfeeling and harsh. She comes up and tells you that she thought you had gone long ago.

“I’ve been through half an hour,” she says gaily, “but I kind of hate to tear myself away. It is really awful funny, isn’t it? I watched an old lady who had sewn a new lace shawl in an old petticoat, and she was most humorous. She told the Custom House inspector that she was eccentric, and always lined her old petticoats with new lace shawls. Ha! Ha! Then there was Mrs. Snooks, that old hatchet-faced thing, who always looked at us through impertinent lorgnettes. She had two dozen real lace handkerchiefs in a candy box, and she informed the inspector that she couldn’t for the life of her think how they had got there. Fun? No show can compete with it. I’d like to stay longer, but I must be off now.” Then, merrily to the inspector, who has condemned all my collars, “Let him off lightly please, mister. He’s a good boy.”

It is gruesome. You watch her tripping lightly away, casting a laughing jest at all the sufferers, and then she disappears. You never liked her, but you hate to see her go—out—out—into the world. She

is really a very horrid woman, but you need her at this moment.

If each passenger were locked in a room with his inspector, the Custom House ordeal would be far less trying. The fact that your earthly belongings are being investigated in front of a cruel crowd is the fact that hurts. Of course, this is due to foolish self-consciousness, but self-consciousness is very general at the end of an ocean trip.

"Did you declare this?" asks the inspector of the luckless woman, as he holds up an imposing bunch of false curls.

Now, in a room, alone with the inspector and her conscience, this woman would wax coy and coquettish. She would smile and be rather winsome. She might even crack a joke, or dig the inspector in the ribs and say, "You naughty boy!" But on the dock, surrounded by women, who know what false curls mean, because they all wear them, and by men who also know what they mean, although they don't wear them, the wretched owner shrinks into her shell, and invents absurd excuses, good enough for any farce. The curls are not for herself, but for her housemaid. Or some-



body has put them in her trunk as a practical joke. If she asserted that they had grown there during the trip, nobody would be surprised.

Women whose power over men is tremendous, and who might decide that the Custom House inspector *was* a man—although appearances argue against it on the dock—cannot arrive at that decision before a peevish crowd. Clever women who see the flaws in any man's coat of armour, find that their marvellous perspicacity counts for nothing on that dock. Cold eyes are watching them; unsympathetic glances chill their fervour. Women whose boast it is that they can wind any man round their little fingers are hopeless amateurs in this public torture chamber. All their sacred possessions are rushed out and "assessed" by men who could be made to tremble at the wiles of splendid coquetry.

The New England spinster "gets through" as soon as the immaculate beauty with the liquid eyes—in fact, sooner, for the New England spinster prides herself on travelling with nothing but a valise and "one suit of clothes." Perhaps her face is a further guarantee of her extreme integrity. She laughs at all fripperies and foibles. It is just possible, of course, bearing in mind the fact that all Custom House inspectors are men—or were at least born masculine—that they hurry her through to get her out of the pretty picture as quickly as possibly. This

may sound uncharitable. The Custom House is an uncharitable topic.

Most people try to make "personal hits" with Custom House inspectors. This is a great mistake. If passengers will think the matter over carefully, they will realise that the inspectors have been inspecting for a long time. No brand of passenger is new, or unexpected, to the inspector. He has investigated cranks, and non-cranks. In his heart of hearts he is not in the least interested in any passenger. He is not yearning for the latest European news. Nor has he dragged himself from his warm bed to indulge in tea-table talk with pleasant young women. Of course, he is a man, but he is also a machine. He is not particularly fond of you—why should he be?—but he is not foolish enough to hate you. You look upon him as an enemy; he regards you as his unpleasant duty. You consider him unsympathetic; he views you as a nuisance, because all duty is a nuisance. All duty is a fearful bore; therefore the inspector is not overjoyed to meet you. He has met people just like you, and will meet them again—perhaps to-morrow.

The Custom House inspector is prepared for all emergencies. He does not court them, but he waits for them. You cannot delude him by humming a merry air when you hand him your keys. You cannot deceive him by opening all your trunks and shrugging your shoulders callously. You cannot in-

duce him to believe that you love him for himself, and that you would sooner spend an hour with a Custom House inspector than with any other person on earth. He knows. He is on his guard. The most affectionate passengers on the dock are those that hide a dutiable secret.

Never appear to be bored. That is a very popular pose, but it is played out. It is very idiotic. Anybody who could be bored at the Custom House investigation would be bored by the fires of Hades. So many people assume nonchalant airs, and these are usually the culprits! Better to utter indignant denunciation—which is at least consistent—or to affect a reckless, intoxicated jollity—which is picturesque—than to appear bored. A human being can be a great many things at the Custom House, and usually is, but he cannot be bored. It is impossible. Every sunbeam has its mote; every transatlantic passenger has his flaw. It may be no larger than a collar button, but he has it. It is absurd to pretend that you don't care a hang what happens to your trunks—those trunks are the joy of your life. The inspector knows that they are as dear to you as your flesh and blood.

Never tell the inspector that you have arranged everything so that he can see at a glance what you own—that your clothes are in one drawer, your collars in another, and your shoes in a third. Inspectors do not expect such delightful consideration. Do

not insist that you bought a "wardrobe trunk" just because it is simpler for the inspectors to examine. They never believe you. They are doubting Thomases. They listen to much pleasant fiction, to many airy fantasies, to splendid flights of exalted imagination, but they will rout out your pet sins, and ask for the duty thereon.

They are not really bad men. Some of them are surely good to their mothers. They probably eat, and drink at times, and behave just like human beings. It is also conceivable that they can laugh at a good joke—but *not* at the good joke you tell them as they excavate your new hat from its hiding place. They go to bed at night, and get up in the morning—get up at ungodly hours, when you insist upon arriving before breakfast. They are also exceedingly sensible. They even reason, and many of them appear to have studied the rules of logic.

People who assume that Custom House inspectors have the brains of a new-born babe, and a passion for fairy stories that a seven-year-old child would reject as far-fetched, suffer a rude awakening.

Never tell your Custom House inspector, as he walks with you to your trunks, that you are going to give a little dinner next week to some very dear friends, and that you hope he will be one of the merry throng. Do not ask him to share your box at the opera, or beg him to let you know his wife's "At Home" day, as you want to call. Do not try

to cheer him by the tidings that you have brought a beautiful meerschaum pipe from Europe for him, which you intend to present him as soon as you have paid duty on it. Nothing doing.

Do not make frantic efforts to *like* the Custom House inspector. Love him only as you love all your fellow-creatures, for he *is* a fellow-creature. There may be times when you would like to qualify the "fellow" with one good whopping adjective, and the "creature" with another, but those times are only the dark and melancholy ones. It is very hard to love a Custom House inspector as a fellow-creature; but it is much harder to like him as a man. Do not try it. You will fail, and it will boot you nothing.

Be yourself at the Custom House examination. Even if you would sooner be each of a dozen other people, be yourself—your blithe, unaffected, yet practical self. If you had to undergo some painful surgical operation you would not be insane enough to tell the doctor that you really enjoyed it; you would not pose as bored in order to deceive the man. You might ask for chloroform or ether, and personally I see no reason why the painful operation at the Custom House should be performed without anæsthetics. It would be easier for you and far simpler for the inspectors. A dock full of chloroformed passengers, happily unconscious of all the agony that their poor trunks suffer, would be a

perfectly consistent innovation. You can almost hear the glad cries of the reawakened travellers:

"Is it over? Thank goodness!"

"I never felt it at all. Did you?"

"Am I through, inspector? Oh, how quick you were."

"I rather liked the sensation. It is not disagreeable."

"It didn't hurt a bit. Can I get up now?"

Many a passenger with courageous soul, who will go through appendicitis unflinchingly, will balk



at the Custom House, where no anæsthetics are used. Why inveigh against vivisection, and countenance the slow tortures of the Custom House, where all men pose as liars—the best and the worst? Why not make it painless, and even enjoyable? Think of the joy of awakening to learn that all your trunks have been opened, and are closed again; that if you have sinned, you have been found out painlessly, and that if you are a villain, nobody but the inspector knows the extent of your villainy. Think of all this that might be, and compare it with what is.

The injury to tender consciences is irreparable. Perhaps the very moustache on your lip has been grown abroad, and you are importing it. The freckles on your face have been made in foreign climes, and you are smuggling them in, free of duty. The very corns on your feet are the result of prancing around foreign roads, and you do not “declare” them. Yet the Custom House rules are very strict. They are relentless. They contain no loophole. There is no reason on earth why you should not pay duty on increased avoirdupois obtained abroad by foreign products. All these thoughts hurt a pious man. He wishes to do his duty by his country; he abominates the idea of wrong; it is quite repulsive to him. What passenger, who has declared everything, does not feel that he should have declared everything else? There are sins of omission, as well as sins of commission. Many passengers com-

mit; many more omit. As a matter of fact, every returning American passenger should pay duty on himself. He is not quite the same as when he left. The difference is, of course, foreign. Why should he bring home that difference? What right has he to leave it undeclared? Suppose that a bad man goes to Europe without a conscience, and comes back with one—why should the United States let it in? Why should a foreign conscience be allowed full sway here?

The Custom House is full of subtleties. The more one hunts, the more subtleties one finds. Perhaps it is just as well to let it alone. Let sleeping dogs lie, and let transatlantic passengers—lie, too. The former will do it in one way, and the latter in another.

